
THE ART OF CRITICISM.

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T H E
ART OF CRITICISM;

AS EXEMPLIFIED IN

DR. JOHNSON'S LIVES

O F

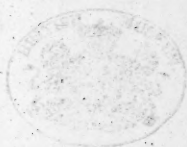
THE MOST EMINENT ENGLISH POETS.

*Ne fortè pudori
Sit tibi Musa Lyrae solers, et Cantor Apollo.*

L O N D O N:

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T H E

ART OF CRITICISM.

COWLEY.

ONE who pretends to give his opinion of such a work as the *Lives of the Poets*, ought to fancy himself qualified to prefix a somewhat satisfactory definition of genius. I therefore denominate it briefly,—*a mind vigorous, comprehensive, and indued with curiosity and susceptibility of impression.* Our author, near the beginning, teaches, that “the true genius is a mind of large and general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction.”

“The true genius is a mind of large and general powers,” would perhaps have
B been

X

been a good distinction ; but by what the Doctor adds, he would suppose there is no natural bent of the mind ; which experience proves to be erroneous. Were it not, parents are right in disregarding the early indications of their children, whence to determine them to the most suitable occupations ; or rather, there are no such indications ; and much pleasantry has been ill bestowed on whipping pedagogues. But, in truth, the minds of men may be rather compared to lands, the kindliness of which for particular cropping is, farmers well know, to be regarded. On the other hand, the knowledge of some things may be in almost every mind, as some plants thrive in almost any soil.

On our author's hypothesis, Cicero might have been a Virgil ; Hogarth a Raphael ; and himself a Petrarch. He soon afterwards says of wit,—

“ Wit, like all other things subject by
 “ their nature to the choice of man, has its
 “ changes and fashions ; and at different
 “ times

"times takes different forms." Afterwards he says, "real mirth must be always natural, and nature is uniform."

Is not then the essence of wit, as well as humour, uniform? Will not certain combinations of thought, always constitute one as well as the other?

"Do thou but threat."——

COWLEY.

"Every reader" (says our author) "finds himself weary with this useless talk of an allegorical being."

Many have but an indifferent opinion of the usefulness of any poetry.

Putting this speech in the mouth of *Envy*, may perhaps be censurable in Epic proper; otherwise I think it beautiful, and the sound is wonderfully adapted to the sense. In "still at thy *voice* start,"—every ear, to which the chinking of a guinea is not more agreeable than sterling verse, will lay the emphasis on *voice*; and many of Cowley's

lines should be scanned in reading, like this
in his Nemeæan Ode of Pindar,—

Black *blood*, and *fi'ry breath*, and pois'nous *soul* he *squeezes*
out.

Moreover, those who wish to master English versification, should practice reading Cowleys, Shakespeares, and Miltons.

Cowley is, on the whole, pourtrayed with ingenuity and penetration, and with justice; so that indeed it is not easy to add much to that which our author has said of him.

DENHAM.

DENHAM.

THERE is a false concord in the sixth line of the quotation concerning translation: *stick* should be *sticks*; *narrowness*, not *arts*, being the correspondent.

“Some hour propitious to poetry.”—I hope our author will not contradict this hereafter. In the verses on the Thames, *whose gravel* would have been better.

MILTON.

“ **T**HE speed of the horseman must be
 “ limited to the power of his
 “ horse.” Yet somewhat depends on the
 skill of the rider.

“ The celebrated word *Smeetymnus*”—
 I am at a loss to apprehend how the ini-
 tial letters (of the names of six persons I
 suppose he means, if he means any thing,)
 could form a word of just eleven.

“ Such is the controversial merriment of
 “ Milton. His gloomy seriousness is yet
 “ more offensive. Such is his malignity,
 “ that hell grows darker at his frown.”
 This is a dreadful relation, which our au-
 thor was resolved should not fall short in
 hideousness of its object.

Some pages after, we have *either* for
both, “ He was now poor and blind.” A
 pertinent remark, which, together with the
 consideration

consideration of his fine genius, may account for the favour shewn him by a monarch not destitute of genius himself, whose right withal, like that of others to sovereignty, was originally founded on actions little less dark than hell; so that the affection for all great persons whatsoever, must virtually and rationally depend on their own deserts, not on those of their tyrant-progenitors, to adore whom would not be far from worshipping the devil.

“ All his wives were virgins.” A peremptory assertion truly.

“ Ministerial,” used in a double meaning unworthy of the author of a large dictionary.

“ This dependance of the soul upon” (why *upon*? would not *on* be sufficient?) “ the seasons; those temporary and periodical ebbs and flows of intellect may, I suppose, justly be derided as the fumes of vain imagination. *Sapiens dominabitur astris;*” — sed, *astra regunt homines.* I warned the Doctor not to contradict his

“ hour propitious to poetry.” Indeed I do not affirm that he does so here. However, experience, I apprehend, convinces most persons of being affected by the seasons and weather, which is true to a proverb. Also, why may not the moon influence genius as well as an ague? It is reasonable to suppose, that such a one as Milton’s might sometimes flag. *Non semper arcum tendit Apollo.* And it is not likely that he should fancifully suppose himself inspired in the winter, and not in the best part of the year; he who was so rapt with vernal delight. A little after the Doctor is undoubtedly right. Since a northern island, Britain, has produced more genius than all the world besides, sufficiently confuting the notion of geographical genius; nevertheless Dutchmen would do well to apply themselves rather to the culture of cabbages.

“ If less could be performed by the
 “ writer, less likewise would content the
 “ judges of his work.”

It

It is the character of genius to grasp at perfection and universality. However, the Doctor at length ridicules his own criticism with much candour, and draws his humour to a focus, by admitting that at all events the author of *Paradise Lost* might have been the rival of Tom Thumb, or a one-eyed mole; and that the copy might be worth a middling horse. But it seems strange that his daughters should read several languages all day long without understanding a word of any one.

“ *L'Allegro & Il Penseroso.* ”—It is amazing that from singularity and caprice, the worthy Doctor should attack his whole fraternity of poets while he is writing their lives. He wished, one would think, to persuade that he had a general aversion to nature. If he mentions love, it is to ridicule it; if the country, it is to sicken at it. Alas! Johnson had no taste for a garden, grove, or a spring. *Speluncæ vivique lacus*, the darkling dell and the nightingale had no charms for him. To him the elements of poetry were uncongenial, and only excited his
laughter.

laughter. According to one of his *Ramblers*, a swept hearth, fire-pan and tongs were his inspirers; and if, perhaps, he did not prefer a marrow-bone, he delighted in wielding the cleaver of criticism; and the smoke of London was as pleasant to him as a coal-pit to a neighbour of Newcastle. How different was his master! Is it possible that the imitator of Addison should be fonder of a shining fender than a brook, and that the writer of the English Dictionary should with the hand of burlesque, throw dirt at the *Penferoso*, at that which breathes the very soul of simplicity? Metaphysical wit was indeed ill calculated for Johnson, who expected rather to make a sound meal of a poem, than to quaff spiritual nectar. Alas! the manner in which the *Penferoso* is stripped of its colouring! As if a traveller should picture a fine palace by saying, that the floor of a chamber was taken from a rookery; a door brought from Jamaica; a wainscot from Norway; and a painted window from an imperial monastery.

Reciting a poem in such a detached manner,

ner, is like expecting a clock to strike when taken to pieces ; is not analysing, but dislocating. The *Allegro*, valuable as it is, is necessarily inferior ; but is copied by a tasty modern, the author of the *Bath-Guide*. In the following pages, a good character is given of Comus, which is then dismissed as “inelegantly splendid, and tediously instructive.” We are wound up to a considerable pitch of expectation, and then, at last, as Virgil and Homer raised sounding names with the intention of knocking their owners at head,—hey ! pass ! ’tis gone ! On the contrary, after exerting his humour on the *Penferoso* and *Allegro*, the Doctor converts them into “two noble efforts of imagination.” The reader is in the situation of James I. who, when he heard a cause, was always of the opinion of the counsel who spoke last. When Johnson is at work on his fig-tree, it is impossible to tell whether he will convert it to a god or a chopping-block.

“ I am now to examine *Paradise Lost* ;
 “ a poem, which, considered with respect
 “ to

“ to design, may claim the first place ; and,
 “ with respect to performance, the second,
 “ among the productions of the human
 “ mind.”

In regard to this assertion, doubtless little acceptable to the admirers of Virgil thus denied competition ; it does not require much penetration to discover that, for design, Johnson places *Paradise Lost* before the *Iliad*, and for performance, between that and the *Eneid* ; the *Odyssey*, &c. being, I presume out of the question : that consequently *Paradise Lost* is superior or inferior to the *Iliad*, as design and performance are to be comparatively rated. The reader, nevertheless, pondering whether, the arduousness of his subject taken into the account, Milton's performance, as well as design, is not equal to Homer's. Still perhaps we should not hastily ascribe to Milton an absolute preference, by reason of the perhaps accidental disadvantage of Homer, that Milton's unparalleled subject was not within the compass of his choice, because unknown to him ; and because Milton was his imitator

tator in outrageousness. Perhaps indeed the *Iliad* may be considered as more the offspring of the genuine rays of Phœbus, *Paradise Lost* as an exotic product of the hot-house; perhaps the former may claim the palm of nature, the latter of art.

“ Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. We read Milton for instruction; retire harassed and overburdened; and look elsewhere for recreation. We desert our master, and seek for companions.”

It may be doubted whether this is panegyric or satire; but it hardly corresponds with the angelic war being the “ favourite of children,” which yet it is. It must be confessed, that there are in *Paradise Lost* many rugged paths between its scenes of grandeur and beauty. As to schoolmasters, of which useful fraternity was Milton, being the butts of the world, the reason is plain; they being sure to run the gauntlet of their scholars for life, and to be repaid in wit for birch; and to ridicule them more effectually, our language has conspired by assigning them

them an odd appellation. When Pipes had worn to pieces his love-letter, he is dispatched to a forry *pedagogue* to supply him with an elegant *succedaneum*.

Our author's observations on versification are such as discover his dexterity in defence of gingle. The reader will be pleased with Mrs. Montague's remark on blank verse, in her critique on Corneille's *Cinna*.—"Possibly there is as much of difficulty in blank verse to the poet (not, I think, to those conversant in it) as there appears of ease in it to the reader. Like the cestus of Venus, formed by the happy skill of the graces, it best exerts its charms, whilst the artifice of the texture is partly concealed. Dryden, who brought the art of rhyme to great excellence, endeavoured to introduce it on our stage; but nature and taste revolted against an imitation of dialogue, so entirely different from that in which men discourse.

"The verse M. de Voltaire thus condemns, is perhaps not less happily (better

" ter surely) adapted, than the iambic to
 " the dramatic offices. It rises gracefully
 " into the sublime; it can slide happily in-
 " to the familiar; hasten its career if com-
 " pelled by vehemence of passion; pause in
 " the hesitation of doubt; appear lingering
 " and languid, in dejection and sorrow; is
 " capable of varying its accent, and adapt-
 " ing its harmony to the sentiment it should
 " convey, and the passion it would excite,
 " with all the power of musical expression."

This fine description, though a lady's, is
 embarrassed with a pedantic superabundance
 of comma's, which, multiplied, are often
 productive of confusion instead of clearness.
 Mr. Mason observes, that dramatic, which
 is colloquial verse, must especially have
 pauses in the lines; and that in blank verse
 in general, " the harmony never results
 " from lines, but passages; and those of
 " very unequal extent."

Rhyme, in which Otway and Dryden
 wrote tragedy, has, after I have been read-
 ing blank verse, appeared to me trifling,
 tink-

tinkling, and childish, like Latin rhymes, in other species of poetry as well as dramatic; and must, I think, in every kind of writing have such an effect on manly ears accustomed to the dignity of blank verse, though a forbidding term. Highly preposterous it certainly is, to jingle through passion and despair, horrors and death. Blank verse is sufficiently out of the track of conversation; and though poetical prose, like that of *Telemachus*, is rather dull in the closet; I cannot help thinking that, plays being intended for acting, not reading, it is habit that has confirmed the opinion that verse of some kind is necessary to the stage, and that admeasurement is indispensable to the *vis dramatica*. If, however, notwithstanding that, according to Horace, tragedy, for the most part, complains in familiar language, goes on foot instead of riding the great horse; it is nevertheless adjudged that verse cannot be dispensed with: still much of a tragedy might be in prosaic, rising occasionally into verse when the fervour of passion or of sentiment may be imagined to raise the soul to enthusiasm, and dictate numbers to the actor,

actor, as the writer might have been thus affected, namely, those of blank verse certainly more fluent and easy than rhymes; the latter being, by Joseph Warton, well compared to latin hexameter and pentameter, which are indeed adapted to love songs, Cupid, and childishness. Johnson had the perspicacity to perceive that rhymes are fitted to didactic terseness, for which alone he was qualified, and therefore wisely alleges all that can be said in favour of it, as he does also of Pope's modernization of Homer. Compared with the learned classical Joseph Warton, Johnson has, together with affectation and rhodomontade, more shrewdness and poignancy, but usually less taste and candour; their sentiments sometimes agreeing, but being as often different and opposite. Of the mud cast by Johnson, as related by Boswell, on Mrs. Montague's book, the true motive was probably her neglect of him, his savage manners not suiting her groupe of literati. As *Telemachus* in general, and many parts of the *Arcadia*, and of the *Scriptures*, may be properly stiled poetic prose, perhaps Bishop Lowth's version

of *Isaiab* may be properly denominated *prosaic poetry*.

Our author, cynical as he was, waved, in passing final sentence on Milton's epic, his sneering, and even a due reprehension of *Paradise Lost*, which is very faulty in the conversion of all things to the purpose of poetical embellishment, whereby he has constituted a huge chaotic romance.

It is true that in the Old Testament, the chariots, arrows, shield, &c. of the Almighty, are figuratively spoken of; but it is casually. The Messiah and the angels are not represented as battling with swords, spears, musquets, and cannon, united with all the extravagance of Homer's fighting mythology, whilst Satan is sometimes described in such a manner, his prowess is so mighty, and his armour so brilliant, as to tend to excite admiration instead of horror. Again, as to theology; Milton is any thing or nothing; Trinitarian, Arian, Socinian, or neither, as suited his poetry; and I know not but he would have been Mahometan,

Mahometan, or Diabolian, had Cromwell, the devil's secretary, Milton being under-secretary, commanded it : therefore the instruction we look for in *Paradise Lost*, can hardly be eminent respecting the faith of this great master.

Pope has an infamous couplet, wherein, for the sake of his poetry, he passes an indirect panegyric on the apostate angels,—

“ Ambition first sprung from your blest abodes ;
 “ The glorious fault of angels and of gods.”

Milton was no less unequal than Cowley ; his versions of some psalms being in the true style of Sternhold and Hopkins, and inferior to Bacon's ; and the concluding line in particular of the sonnet on his wife, is in the Cowleian style of wit.

BUTLER.

" Omnia vult belle Matho dicere ; dic aliquando

" Et bene, dic neutrum, dic aliquando male."

ADDISON indeed observes, that Milton knew the art of relieving the reader at intervals, in order to unbend his mind to come fresh to his principal subject ; but authors are rarely commended for the easy attainment of writing ill ; and Johnson, I believe, would have hardly acknowledged that ever he did, how true soever a confession : he who would be always in the right. Some critics have taken great pains to excuse Homer's naps, but have not endeavoured to raise merit from them ; yet such an allegation is a very convenient apology at least.

" Imagination is useleſs without knowledge," is ſo far true, that perſons in that predicament are poorly qualified to benefit others ; but their minds are happily qualified for the reception of entertainment.

" Nor,

“ Nor, even though another Butler should arise, would another *Hudibras* obtain the same regard.” But, according to our author’s own theory, true general humour must always entertain ; and somewhat of general humour is necessarily blended with particular ; so that Cervantes, Butler, Anstey, Peter Pindar, and others, will be always read with pleasure. But burlesque, the grand source of ridicule, is of a nature less truly engaging, and will be consequently less permanently prevalent when ludicrous than when grave ; which latter kind of humour is rather a curious delineation of the foibles and manners of others, than any laughable representation.

OTWAY.

AS to the affinity between writing and acting plays, one principally depends on mental, the other on corporeal accomplishments. The Irene of our author, who would not have excelled in the latter, has some inaccuracies, and too much of the horrible. Even tragedies are exhibited as entertainments; and who can be gratified with the representation of tortures? It is the excitement of contemplative pity, of the sentimental and spiritual affections, the terrific and alarming; like the catastrophe of the *Duke of Guise*, and of the magic of inventive and eccentric genius exhibited in the matchless hints of Shakespeare, that carrying us away from earth, are the best calculated for the drama, whatever is the verbal import of *tragedy*, rather than things excruciating and shocking to behold. It was probably to Shakespeare's ethereal imagination, that Milton, who, if allowed to be the greater poet, ought, to balance their deserts,

deserts, to resign the palm of genius, was indebted for his exquisiteness, and Pope for the manners of his Sylphs. In the *Tempest*, do we not acknowledge the fountain whence flowed the living spring of the *Penferoso*, and perceive the machinery of the *Rape of the Lock*? If Shakespeare, how childish forever are Prospero's threats to Ariel, had not written

“ Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell.

“ Hark! now I hear them—Ding—dong—bell.”

which itself, had it been by an ordinary writer translated from Ovid, or written by Cowley, would, I suspect, have been deemed childish. Indeed, as extremes in a manner meet, so do reaches and childishness of thought. If, I say, Shakespeare had not written these fancifully charming lines, would Milton have written

“ Over some wide-water'd shore,

“ Swinging slow with fullen roar?”

Yet were they inhabited by twin souls, one of which might only anticipate the other. But if Milton drew from Shakespeare's fount, evident it is that Shakespeare him-

self drew from a still higher head, and watered the enchanting exotics of the *Tempest* from the celestial rivers of the Helicon of the *Apocalypse*; witness these lines, &c.

“ Sometimes a thousand twanging instruments

“ Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices*.”

By the way, how absurd is Pope's assigning the guidance of the planets to such puny agents as the Sylphs.

Otway's life is an imperfect epigram, because too long,

* Revelation, chap. VIII. v. 5. chap. XIV. v. 2. &c.

WALLER.

WALLER.

“ THE writer of the life prefixed to “ his works.” Why would not our author tell us who this was in one word, instead of employing nine, to leave us in the dark? The frequent occurrence of these blind periphrases, is an objection to these *lives*, similar to that which he makes to the epitaphs of Pope without the names, for though every one of the present age knows the persons meant, that may not be the case with posterity.

“ *Sacharissa*, from the Latin appellation “ of *fugar*.” Sugar is said to be an acid; and Waller’s *fugar* had undergone digestion.

“ He doubtless praised many whom he “ would have been afraid to marry; and “ perhaps married one whom he would “ have been ashamed to praise.”

Such

Such strokes as these, how just soever is this in respect to truth, and how tasteful itself to the classical censures of antithesis, who doat on the pure simplicity of the ancients, discriminate a writer of genius and enliven a subject. Antitheses, especially in rhyme, present themselves at once to the mind, like a regular building. Mallet, in his life of Bacon, has some such strokes. Voltaire abounds with them, delighting especially to level them at priests, whose assistance he is nevertheless said to have craved when sick, though I can hardly believe him to have been so weak as to rest his salvation on a suborned repentance in the lap of men, who, like indeed other religionists, devote their faces to God, and hearts to the devil; and, a few members excepted, ought to be hooted out of the world for their villainous hypocrisy, and will doubtless bring the grey hairs of the church with sorrow to the grave; wretches, whose trade it is to barter inheritances in the other world by auction. If that sprightly author was deistical, I hope it cannot be truly affirmed that he was atheistical.

If

If his *candide* seems to bear hard on the goodness of Providence, it may be attributed to the reverberation of extremes propagated by others, and to his impatience of Pope's fatalism, differing from that of others in imputing the disorders of the world to the Subreme Being; whereas other fatalists annul his providence, by substituting nature in its place; but each system alike cuts up morality and virtue by the roots. *Whatever is, is right*, without qualification, is directly contradictory to the fact that evil ever entered the world at all, and of which truth nobody was more sensible than Pope himself, who was so fond of dealing out the appellations of knave and villain, words, I apprehend, without meaning, if *wrong* had never been committed: so that the axiom renders Johnson's culpable representation of Pope's epistolary satires, that he could not hope to mend the world, true indeed, as it could want no mending. Nevertheless, every person of sound piety and religion hopes and believes, that through the controuling providence of God, which said to the sea, *Thus far*

far shalt thou go, and no farther, all disorders will be at length rectified, and that *all will finally be right*. Indeed Johnson's morality, interspersed through his biography, is of an indifferent, vulgar, worldly, and warped into a suspicious cast, that seemed to confute Pope's position. But indeed, as says Shakespeare's Timon, those who hastily blame persons for being captivated with the blandishments of pleasure, are such as never experienced it. So it may be alleged, that Johnson wrote his rigid precepts of morality, when a bulk, not a sophia, was his seat of rest: that he had been "a slave, "whom Fortune's tender art with favour never clasped." For as adversity is excellently denominated a school, so is prosperity a snare. However, a man of his understanding should, at all times, have reserved *amo meliora* for an apology, and not have left the Heathen Stoics, men who, on account of their self-denial, deserve the appellation of natural Christians, the palm of moral philosophy.

Of paradoxes, the former part of the
twenty-

twenty-second verse of the third chapter of Genesis ;—*And the Lord God said, behold the man* (the woman is not mentioned) *is become as one of us, to know good and evil—* seems to present one. Yet may it not be resolved in this manner ?—That before their fall, Adam and Eve knew not, were unacquainted with the mixed condition ensuing to the world, having experienced nothing but good, unsophisticated with evil. As to the latter part of this verse, *and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever*, it is beyond my resolution ; for to interpret it that mankind, how brutal soever they are, and *like the beasts that perish*, will not be immortal ; or that the wicked will not be so, though a seemingly desirable thing, and *that many are called, but few are chosen*, with some few other texts, are to be understood in such a sense, seems rash and heterodox. And that Mrs. Piozzi, in her expression, that our author's excellence was beyond that of perishable beings, alluded to that of Scripture, *like the beasts that perish*, is a presumption still less justifiable. I may here observe,
that

that one Francis Osborn, has a curious remark on the words, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*;—that the meaning might be, that he who should do it, would be born of a woman only.

“ They (says Waller) who think themselves in danger, and they who have nothing left, can never give freely,” seems, in the latter part, defective; the tenour seeming to require, *they who have nothing left, are never afraid of giving freely.*

“ Cousin Waller, I must talk to those men in their own way,” shews Cromwell in his true colours,—that of a villainous hypocrite, which some persons have endeavoured to disguise, as if he thought himself, or at length persuaded himself, that he was sincere in his affectation of piety, making, as says *Prospero, in the Tempest*, “ a liar of his memory. Religious cant consists in vesting common modern ideas in antiquated scriptural phraseology; in changing the essence and unaffected spirit of religion, into senseless words and preposterous sentences,

sentences, like affected distinctions of square-toed shoes, multiplicity of buttons and long pockets, and is burlesque and mockery. Of the engines of tyranny, there is none more efficacious and grating than creating laws to restrain others, and to be dispensed with by the enactors. And this glaring policy it was that critically framed *the self-denying ordinance*, pretended to restrain members of Parliament from holding commissions in the army under the cloak of patriotism, which Cromwell himself was notoriously to break through, seize the very command of the army after having virtually commanded it already, murder garrisons, and trample on the nation. Yet, because mankind are always to be fools, a wise axiom of Pope, we have lately seen triumphant, hypocritical patriotism as preposterously impudent as Cromwell's, holden out in the practices concerning the Irish commercial treaty, which was respectively represented as injurious to both kingdoms, and both were fools enough to gulp down the matchless paradox hewn out with a cleaver, so coarsely as to have stuck in the throat of any other people

people on earth ; the offspring of which is such an headless monster as the world has never before seen, and as cannot possibly live long ; but will probably, e'er it die, disgorge, like the dragon in the Revelation, a deluge that will shake one or other of the kingdoms to the foundation. If appearances may be depended on, the monarch of France also may experience the fruits of paradoxes, and see duplicity brought home to his own door ; so dangerous it is to foster a serpent, dandle fire, and raise the devil in sport. Nevertheless, if he was outwitted by the fanatics of America, his concessions to the Protestants will stamp him the real patriot of mankind.

Our author mentions Cromwell with a moderation that I should not have expected. It may indeed be alleged, according to Mr. Boswell, that it is of little importance of what tyrant-conqueror the successors bear sway ; and that the nation, in acquiescing in Oliver's usurpation, of evils chose the least. But of these evils this arch hypocrite has been the principal cause, who had regularly

regularly conducted things to such a situation, that the nation was obliged either to admit a notorious usurpation, or be plunged into utter confusion and ruin. Cromwell seems to have surpassed Cæsar; in that; as Warburton observes, the spirit of the nation was at the highest when he subdued it; whereas Rome was enervated with luxury; and there had been a perpetual dictator before.

By the way, Sylla's resignation, his character considered, seems one of the most extraordinary events in history; and to have designated him ambitious and savage, two qualities usually united, as he had been the greatest, because the wisest man of the three, exhibits a mighty proof of the vanity of all human things; and that on the mind, even the love of power, the last infirmity of greater minds, though the greatest of all are superior still, unless indeed for the opportunity of doing good. But the underminers of states may be necessitated to persist, from the danger or impossibility of retreating. Those possess not the most

D

exalted

exalted ideas who cannot really believe, that cannot be persuaded that Diogenes preferred his tub, whence he might expatiate on the orbs of heaven, to the throne, tottering, whereon Alexander surveyed the subject earth.

Cromwell effected by dissimulation that which Cæsar accomplished by largess; and may perhaps be considered as a cunninger politician than the other. In public and private courage and conduct, they were equal and wonderful: but Cromwell had nothing but fly art, to oppose to Cæsar's oratory and literature. Farther; Cæsar was liberal; Cromwell was mean; and would not at a less propitious time have risen higher than a methodist parson. Cæsar collected dissipation into monarchy; Cromwell debased monarchy into tyranny.— Their ambition and narrow failure of a crown, had a very remarkable affinity; and perhaps after all, they both deserve the name of cowards, for standing shilly shally within reach of that for which their souls longed. There was also another resemblance in their warfare: that had Pompey's

pey's army had patience, Cæsar would probably have been ruined ; and that had not the Scotch army of saints been induced by second sight to engage Cromwell, he would probably have been reduced by famine.

On the rebellion, Francis Osborn remarks, that the Jesuits, always working by indirect methods, landed it in Presbyterian bottoms, and in those of the Anabaptists ; who naturally, he says, disapprove of all government whatsoever. And he observes in the another place, that the Arminians are to Papists, just what scallions are to onions ; that is, they are only not quite so strong. As to the Puritans, though candour should be always embraced, it must be acknowledged, that they joined with the Papists in the time of James II. so that even the most incongruous extremes coincided in the intention of overturning the golden medium of the church of England. So excellent indeed is the medium in all things, though nothing on earth will be ever free from imperfection, that, corrupt and perverse as is the lot of humanity, even reli-

gion itself must not be carried to extremes. In fact, common sense, and the light of nature, have never been totally obscured by religion and priestcraft, which, by superstition, monastic monopolization, &c. has even threatened the extirpation of mankind. For, among the manifold contrivances of Providence, He has so constituted things, that evils destroy themselves; and, when outrageous, become their own cure; despots who have laid waste the world, a Cæsar, and a Kouli Khan, at length fell by a bodkin. Again, when knavery is universal, such a system is in a manner the same with universal honesty; because all cheating, one another in their turns, has a similar effect to nobodys' cheating. When the Jewish priests were so numerous that all were about to become priests, as all people are now becoming Jesuits, a reform became absolutely necessary, and desired by the priesthood itself. As the effect of all being priests, (the remark may be extended also to other trades,) besides the impoverishment of the priesthood, and its virtual annihilation, there being no ponds in the sea, must be that of depopulating

depopulating and laying waste the world. Moreover, an overgrown, aged priesthood and mystery, are in danger of letting in the light through their chinks, and enable the laity to get a glimpse of the penetralia; whereby, becoming witnesses of some chicanery, they may erroneously conclude of the substance of religion itself, and so perhaps indeed pass from superstition to the meeting extreme of scepticism and irreligion; the circumstance that renders the inculcation of hard mystery so dangerous. And thus, in regard to evils undoing themselves; when tyranny, or chicanery of any kind, have threatened total destruction, the elastic *vis insita* inherent, notwithstanding its baseness, in human nature, buoying up in strong minds, has always availed more or less to pierce the veil drawn over the eyes of the simple bulk of mankind, and fanned a spark both of political and spiritual liberty, and preserved from annihilation the human race; an event, I will not however pronounce on, whether to be deprecated or wished. It is the natural consequence of insufferable oppression, notwithstanding the unprincipled

carelessness, cowardice, and selfishness of mankind; that the pent tide of the people forced upon its banks, rushes over and bears down all before it. When the blood is driven on the heart by despair, the heart must repel it, or death ensues. Says Osborn, "keep reason always in your eye, which should never be lost sight of in any worldly action, and be but eclipsed in things relating to religion." He has withal a very farcastic stroke at the Pope, "whose infallible holiness, (says he,) has announced himself a fool on record, in punishing Galileo for asserting the truth of there being antipodes."

"His (Waller's) opinion concerning the duty of a poet, is contained in this declaration, — that he would blot from his works any line that did not contain some motive to virtue." And his motto is

Non ego mordaci distinxì carmine quenquam.

Perhaps it is not easy to conceive, how love-verses should, in every line, inculcate
virtue

virtue in its common acceptation. Possibly, as *virtus* imports *valour*, so, by virtue, Waller might mean gallantry in love. This gallantry is, it seems, Gothic, which gives me an opportunity of noticing this passage of this Osborn, who was one of the queer dogs:—"If any lady be furiously enamoured of you, whose fortune cannot correspond for the troubles incident to marriage, (which, God knows, are not a few), venture the loss of her rather than yourself: it being the highest degree of folly to hang an indissoluble padlock on your future hopes, only to save a wench's longing." He relates, that when King James I. partook of a huge treat made for him by Sir John Fortescue, "his Majesty made a jest of it, and departing, let a fellow stand in the porch." Pardon me, reader.

The most frequent objection to Waller's versification is, not only using *do*, but accenting it: otherwise both *do* and *ed* need not be excluded diversified poetry. His verse is rather smooth than vigorous:—

D 4

" Waller

" Waller was smooth ; but Dryden taught to join,
 " The varying pause, the full-resounding line,
 " The long majestic march, and energy divine." }

As to sacred poetry, mine, and our author's opinion, not coinciding, his idea of poetry that it is useless and improper for those purposes which are alone worthy of high regard, having been engendered by superstition, I shall pass to a stricture on the expression, *passed the zenith*, which I think not apt. The allusion is to noon. *Zenith* conveys a true idea of *height*, therefore the *zenith of glory* is well, but does not with so much propriety designate a stage of the progression of life. The variation of the zenith is the same, day and night, during the twenty-four hours, sometimes indeed called the day ; but compared with a man's life, it is best considered as the time only the sun is above the horizon, or at most, from the break of day till its close ; the different points of the day's revolution corresponding with the stages of life. Be that as it may, Fenton's allowance of only twenty years of maturity to man's life, especially applied

applied to Waller who wrote well till eighty-two, seems too small.

After an effort of exalted stile respecting religion,—“such as it is, it is known already,” is a fall off not very intelligible.

Having noticed several observations of Mr. Francis Osborn, I shall take this opportunity of the mention of religion, to quote from him something of importance, the following presumptions of the existence of a Deity:—“Nor are we” (as to ourselves, in regard to the sphere of our own understandings) “totally destitute of a shadow of Omniscieny, since, from a far lower situation than heaven, we are able, at one glance to overlook a whole city, and by a single trumpet to alarum an army. Yet our senses are capable to receive no small augmentation from the assistance of art. An infallible argument that the perfection of these qualities does not determine in the person of any creature; but is something paramount to all that hath yet risen within the compass of our experience,

“ence, it being impossible but that a fu-
 “perlative power should rest somewhere,
 “Nor can we be competent judges of the
 “motions of God, that have nothing to
 “measure by but sense, much too weak to
 “discern the motion of a shadow, or the
 “growth of a plant, till time hath rendered
 “them apparent. Wherefore, we are far
 “unable to comprehend the lines of Provi-
 “dence, imperceptible to every intelligence
 “but that of Him who has the sole dispo-
 “sure of all things ; it not being probable
 “that man should comprehend the out-
 “goings of God, whilst he is unable to give
 “any reason for his own.” And thus (he
 might have added) whilst according to the
 doleful ditty; “As in beginning was, is
 “now, and so shall be for evermore.” We
 dream that the world and things will al-
 ways continue in their present state, and
 fools and knaves hope it also : we may sud-
 denly find the day of judgment at our doors,
 as a thief in the night.

Waller, whose *life* is written with ability
 and impartiality, seems to have deserved
 the

the title of a Vicar of Bray. And let me defend our author against the censure of mixing politics with literature ; though not of varnishing over King Charles's illegal measures ; I think with Hume, that something may be justly alleged for them. Nor, on the other hand, of frittering away those of the dregs of the faction. A biographer was professedly to write an account of the the lives of the poets, and consequently of their circumstances and characters.

But I think he has made rather a jumble, by giving a partial account of their writings, in the course of their lives ; and that the work would have been more perfect, if, in proceeding with their histories, he had only mentioned the titles and dates of their writings, and reserved his critiques by themselves.

POMFRET.

POMFRET.

OF this placid poet, who is dispatched
laconically, the lines that most pleased
me were these on pleasing melancholy ;—

“ The sweetest music to the grove we owe,
“ Is mournful Philomel’s melodious wee.”

DORSET.

DORSET.

THE adage, that *the elder brother has the estate, and the younger the sense*, is not well founded. That the younger should have most learning, and the elder most genius, might be expected ; but both seems accidental. It is indeed very meritorious in persons born to opulence, to be at the pains of acquiring knowledge. For young persons qualified by fortune and genius for merriment and conviviality, to leave the flowery paths of sense for the thorny ones of science ; to quit, in spite of the taunts of the gay and the amorous, the flowing bowl for Coke and Lyttelton, and the smiles of beauty for triangles and parallelograms, seems almost marvellous ; yet constellations of literary nobles, as Roscommon, Hallifax, Sheffield, Dorset, &c. have appeared.

JOHN

JOHN PHILIPS.

WE understand that Philips presents us with the husks, but makes an apology for the kernels of poetry: that in his *Blenheim* we find the lumber and dim windows, but not the magnificence and good cheer of ancient castles; that we view the quarries of stones and dwarfs, but look in vain for the giants and enchantments of Shakespeare and Milton: that, according to Swift's caricature of Dryden compared with Pindar, we have an enormous helmet to contemplate, in which the head is almost lost. It is not to be doubted, that critics pick up many of their notices from conversation, &c. still they must not be deprived of the merit of them; and Johnson's criticism, though severe, on John Philips, has rarely appeared to advantage. The *Splendid Shilling* is a very pleasing burlesque of the best, that is the grave kind, consisting in the investiture of trifling subjects in pompous stile; the other, the putting off a sublime

sublime subject in mean stile, that is the ludicrous kind, being inferior. Miller's criticism, that the poem on cyder is really instructive in the art, though I apprehend King's, if it was King's, poetical receipt to make an apple-pye to be a more practical treatise; reminds me of the same question concerning Virgil's *Georgics*, which, even in England, I think not a useless treatise on agriculture, if well understood even now when the science is in so improved a state; but I am entirely at a loss to understand Virgil's caution not to sow wheat before May, (Georg. I. l. 225.) if *Maiæ* means May, lest the ears should be empty; an idea that, were the spring the time of sowing wheat in Italy, which, however, seems from the context not to have been the case, contradicts all experience, late sown corn producing the thinnest and worst grain.



WALSH.

WALSH.

IF it is considered that this poet was a gallant, and attached to Gothic affections, he finds more quarter than might have been expected; but at last receives this kick,—
 “ He is known more by his familiarity
 “ with great men, than by any thing done
 “ or written by himself.”

It is, however, probable from that very circumstance, that he had something in him engaging; unless drinking and gaming, &c. were the accomplishments that in those days obtained the notice of the great.

As our author ends his first volume like a Parthian, we shall see him enter on the second like a crab; I mean his Latin idiom of beginning a sentence at the latter end, with *of*, as at the commencement of the life of Dryden.

DRYDEN.

puns, could not but have value; so we have here an excellent description of bombast, and afterwards another vigorous specimen of indignant satire;—

“ From breaths of fools thy commendation spreads;
 “ Fame sings thy praise with mouths of loggerheads;
 “ With noise and laughing each thy fustian greets,
 “ ’Tis clapt by quires of empty-headed cits.”

In which we perceive that coarse expressions, such as Juvenal adopted, are those for hacking and hewing, for which a cleaver is much better fitted than a polished instrument.

“ This, as Lamotte relates himself to
 “ have heard, was the real practice of the
 “ poet.”

This is an odd relation, that Dryden should think a fit of the gripes necessary to describe a hero in love. Indeed a metaphysician, or a methodist, might benefit the spirit by purging off the gross parts. Soon after we find our author calling his father an old bookseller. He was hardly always
 old;—

old ;—though persons have been said to have been born drunk.

“ —As to retire for quiet to an infallible “ church.”

This is a sentence worthy at least of as wise a theologian as our author, who himself was always old and antiquated in religious matters. An *infallible church* that (he might have added) annihilates concern and thought, and which is the sister of a kind of inverse scepticism that is to lead men blindfold to heaven. As to what he adds, that every artifice was then used to shew Popery in its fairest form ; were the Protestants (probably three fourths of the nation) idle, and did they not shew her in her foulest form ? “ It is natural to hope, “ that a comprehensive, is likewise an elevated soul ; and that whoever is wise, is “ also honest.” By *wise*, is meant *knowing* ; for, doubtless, every *wise* man, in the true sense of the word, is honest ; *rogue and fool*, notwithstanding the large portion of the

world comprehended in those terms, being certainly synonymous.

“ In this volume is comprised the well-known Ode on St. Cecilia’s Day, which, as appeared by a letter communicated to Dr. Birch, he spent a fortnight in composing and correcting.” Dr. Warton, I think, says that he wrote it at one sitting: still, the correction included, both accounts may be true, though Dryden was not wont to revise, and the piece is not correct.

As to the colloquial dullness of Dryden, who wrote so freely and carelessly, and was agreeable to the great, his modesty might embarrass his conversation: but it is not improbable, that he thought it beneath his dignity to open in common company. If we may believe Lord Chesterfield, the Duke of Ormond was the most inoffensive and weakest of men; an account probably exaggerated.

The expression, *holy butcher*, however ridiculous,

diculous, is a good burlesque appellation for the operators of barbarous and idiot superstition, in the execution of which, *ipsa pulcherrima*, Dido held the bowl; and Cicero, of whom, with all his celebrity, it is dubious whether vanity or superstition rendered him the greater fool, was as contemptible as any one. If Dryden and Johnson also were possessed of superstition, it was not of a sanguinary cast, though both of them were possessed of a degree of savageness; nor ought we to pronounce the original uncorrected tenets of the Church of Rome erroneous. Indeed Dryden and Johnson had some considerable resemblances; and the sultan Johnson signified from his chair in the isle of Sky, his project of keeping a seraglio) or a harem, we should rather say) with no less dignity than the monarch Dryden issued edicts from his seat in the balcony at Will's. *But there is no reason for supposing that Johnson disbelieved the religion which he only entertained thoughts of disobeying. He forgot his duty rather than disowned it. His tendency to being a Turk was the effect of levity, negligence, and loose conversation, with a desire of accom-*

modating himself to the corruption of the times, by venturing to be wicked as far as he durst. When he professed himself a convert to Mahometanism, he did not pretend to have received any new conviction of fundamental doctrines. I hope the reader will excuse this paraphrase of the Doctor's apology for Dryden.

Three hundred verses for 12,000*l.* is just sixpence a verse, which, according to the present rate of money, would be, I suppose, somewhat more than a shilling; and the 20*l.* which Milton was to receive first and last for *Paradise Lost*, would be now perhaps 80*l.*

“ *It was more eligible to go wrong with one than right with the other,*” is surely a dangerous apophthegm, somewhat resembling the theological position, that men ought to speak alike, whatever they think.

“ To write *con amore*, with fondness for
 “ the employment, with perpetual touches
 “ and retouches, with unwillingness to take
 “ leave

“ leave of his own idea, and an unwearied
 “ pursuit of unattainable perfection.”

Certainly not. Yet of most writers, a pocket-volume, in a close stile and compacted thought, is, in the present oppression of books, much preferable to a folio. If one's first thoughts are the best, it is by chance; and they are like a lucky throw at dice; and he who depends on them for his reputation, will probably loose it. The mind, like a hampered net, is seldom at once disentangled; besides that the expression is nearly always improvable,

“ He could not, like Milton and Cowley,
 “ have made his name illustrious merely
 “ for his learning.”

It was hardly possible for a man continually scribbling, to dive into the depths of science. But indeed it is difficult to collect from our author, whether Dryden was learned or not. He seems to allow him an intuitive knowledge; a wide range, though he kept the high road: represents his li-

terature, as either obvious, superficial, or erroneous; as knowing things, but not books; as hatching the egg without sitting on it.

“ More examples of more modes of composition” is awkwardly expressed.

“ A translator is to be like his author; it is not his business to excel him.”

This assertion seems hypothetical. As a translator will never equal some beauties, should he not compensate by softening some blemishes? Pope, however cunningly our author wards off the objection, may perhaps be justly blamed for refining on Homer's simplicity. Be that as it may, he, quality and quantity taken together, is probably the best translator that ever existed. On Ovid's *Sappho to Phaon*, he has especially much improved in the pathetic, in which he also much excelled his master Dryden, and has avoided some puerilities. Addison, in his excellent specimens of the *Metamorphoses*, conforms to the turn both
of

of the thought and poetry, his English dancing to the Latin.

“ Allegories drawn to great length will
“ always break. Charles could not run
“ continually parallel with David.”

Might it not hence be concluded, that David or Charles were personifications? Is the poem of *Abshalom and Achitophel* properly an allegory, and not rather a parallel? Yet it cannot be easily supposed that our author did not know what an allegory is.

“ The subject had likewise another inconvenience: it admitted little imagery
“ or description; and a long poem of mere
“ sentiment *easily* becomes tedious; though
“ all the parts forcible, and every line kindles
“ new rapture, the reader, if not relieved
“ by the interposition of something that
“ soothes the fancy, grows weary of admiration, and defers the rest.”

That *new raptures want something to soothe the fancy*, &c. will hardly bear. So long as
great

great and fresh delights last, less are hardly required, an anticlimax of enjoyment. But, moreover, what is a stronger proof of the merit of a piece than its supplying repeated raptures? “ O, ’tis too much for man, but “ let it ne’er be less !” Whatever may be alleged for a truce of relief, few but envious persons are displeased with being too much delighted. Besides that, unity or uniformity is the perfection of a piece ; when the mind has prepared itself to be soothed, wit may indeed be not acceptable ; but when it is set for wit, wit is expected. *Easily* is in this quotation unmeaning, as *enough* and *sufficiently* sometimes in these *Lives*, used as the adjuncts of indifference or ill, is at best an unmeaning, and rather indeed an absurd idiom, or low humour.

“ Who can forbear to think of an enchanted castle, with a wide moat and
 “ lofty battlements, walls of marble and
 “ gates of brass, which vanishes at once
 “ into air, when the destined knight blows
 “ his horn before it ?”

Somewhat

Somewhat like this, was the sudden change in the nation in favour of prerogative, after the dissolution of the parliament at Oxford ; and indeed something not unlike it has happened in these times.

“ Personal resentment, though no laudable motive to satire, can add great force to general principles.”

Much has been said on both sides concerning personal satire, which goes by the name of *lampoon*. It is certain that a person labouring under the injuries of power, has often no possibility of redress: in which case, let lawyers say what they will, reason will put in its claim, and even religion will not silence common sense; and though a public robber may feel the force of general satire, a private oppressor must expect individual retaliation; a sarcasm must be to the sufferer instead of an action, and a point of wit for a point of law. There is, however, little danger in libelling a poor man, who, were he able to make experiment of the law, would find it a whited sepulchre.

Of

Of the strictures, one on Brady, and the other on Trapp, the former contains a witicism of the direct kind, of which our author is sparing; the other, one of those dry sarcasms of which he was very fond. Both of these may be just: but he betrays a prejudice against blank verse, which being professedly the best vehicle of tragedy, cannot be improper for epic; and I have observed, that after having been for some time used to blank verse, an unpropitious denomination, the jingle of rhyme has seemed to me childish.

“ The works of Chaucer, upon which
 “ this kind of rejuvenescence has been be-
 “ stowed, require little criticism.”

Chaucer is no favourite with our author; but his wit was brilliant, and his humour powerful; too hostile to the chicanery of priestcraft for Johnson, and very extraordinary at that time of day; but sometimes indecent. Dryden is probably partial in setting *Palamon* and *Arcite*, on a level with the *Æneid*; yet Chaucer was a great genius,
 and

and deemed the primo-genitor of English poetry. His *Flower and Leaf*, past over by the smoak-loving Johnson, is charmingly modernized: the nineteen first lines in particular are so delightful, and contain so incomparable a sketch of the beauty of Spring, that they should charm all readers:

“ Now turning from the wint’ry signs, the Sun
 “ His course exalted thro’ the Ram had run;
 “ And, whirling up the skies, his chariot drove
 “ Thro’ Taurus and the lightfome realms of love,
 “ Where Venus from her orb descends in show’rs,
 “ To glad the ground, and paint the fields with flow’rs;
 “ When first the tender blades of grass appear,
 “ And buds that yet the blast of Eurus fear,
 “ Stand at the door of life and doubt to cloath the year;
 “ Till gentle heat, and soft repeated rains
 “ Make the green blood to dance within their veins:
 “ Then, at their call, embolden’d out they come,
 “ And swell the gems and burst the narrow room;
 “ Broader and broader yet their blooms display,
 “ Salute the welcome sun and entertain the day:
 “ Then from their breathing souls the sweets repair
 “ To scent the skies and purge the unwholsome air;
 “ Joy spreads the heart, and with a gen’ral song
 “ Spring issues out, and leads the jolly months along.”

“ With the simple and elemental pas-
 “ sions, as they spring separate in the mind,
 “ he

“ he seems not much acquainted ; and seldom describes them but as they are complicated by the various relations of society, and confused in the tumults and agitations of life.” I question if this is not as just a characteristic of himself as of Dryden, whom Congreve affirms to have been likewise humane, though he was impatient of rivalry and savage ; for with cruelty and savageness to other writers, was Johnson’s tenderness combined.

“ *I knew, (says Dryden,) that they were bad enough to please, even when I wrote them,*” is the true *concordia discors* of wit. But why should our author suppose that Dryden should please himself with the fustian which he thus stigmatizes ? What follows is not the dictate of nature, nor often of religion, but of the world, from which Johnson was not emancipated, how much soever he was from the flesh and the devil.

“ He had more music than Waller, more vigour than Denham, and more nature than Cowley,” is a broken apposition.
Music

Musick was Waller's excellence; vigour Denham's; but nature was not Cowley's.

“ The hastiness of his productions might
 “ be the effect of necessity; but his subsequent neglect could hardly have any
 “ other cause than impatience of study.”
 Revisions of past productions, must doubtless interrupt the composition of new; also, his readers had not to regret that their editions, were superseded by others, and the vigorous raciness of his genius did not stagnate in dregs, though his wit sometimes ran foul. However, a remarkable instance of his dislike of trouble, is his discovery in writing the latter part of his preface to his Juvenal, that he had not spelt *satire* right, and that, as he says, he thought it not worth while to look it over again to correct it. But I am inclined to think, that the etymology is *satyr*, from the satyrs.

“ As these lines” (*of fourteen syllables*)
 “ had their break on *cæsura*, always at the
 “ eighth syllable, it was thought, in time,
 “ commodious to divide them; and quatrains

“ trains of lines, alternately consisting of
 “ eight and six syllables, make the most
 “ soft and pleasing of our lyric measures ;
 “ as,

“ *Relentless Time, destroying power,*
 “ *Which stone and brass obey ;*
 “ *Who giv'st to ev'ry flying hour*
 “ *To work some new decay.”*

And when there is only one rhyme in the
 twenty-eight syllables, there is no other dif-
 ference but the ranging them in two lines,
 or in four.

“ In examining their propriety, it is to
 “ be considered, that the essence of verse
 “ is regularity ; and its ornament, variety.”
 An excellent, if a new observation.

“ The English Alexandrine breaks its
 “ lawful bounds, and surprisef the reader
 “ with two syllables more than he ex-
 “ pected.”

Of this there is a fine instance in Pope's
Temple of Fame ;—

“ Around

“ Around a thousand winged wonders fly,
 “ Borne by the trumpet’s blast, and scatter’d thro’ the sky.”

But there is in Dryden’s Eneid an incomparable couplet, in which the Alexandrine is overtopped by a double one, or verse of fourteen syllables ;—

“ For thee the Ocean smiles, and smooths her wav’y breast,
 “ And Heav’n itself with more serene and purer light is
 “ blest.”

And if a common verse of ten had preceded in the same rhyme, it would have been a most beautiful climax of numbers, as thus,—

For thee Aurora spreads her spangled vest,
 For thee the Ocean smiles, and smooths her wav’y breast,
 And Heav’n itself with more serene and purer light is blest.

Regular exactness in poetry, Virgil, whose versification is admired by all, even affected to break. As to bracing of triplets, it destroys the surprise of the reader, who, if he has a quick eye and ready modulation of his voice, will perceive and express them readily enough without mechanical assistance.

ance. Our author has written this great poet's life with candour, analyzed his character with much ingenuity, and dismissed him with a genteel and just eulogium.

SMITH.

SMITH.

“ ’TWERE to be wished.”—Indefinite and strange, where the sense might be grammatically and clearly ascertained! *Were*, is continually used even by good authors, instead of *would be*; and here, *’Twere*, should be, *It is*. However, this character of Smith, by Oldsworth, though doubtless strained, is, in my opinion, a masterpiece of panegyric.

Why are we not told the reason of Smith’s name being really *Neal*?

How do, “His play” (*Phædra*) “pleased the critics, and the critics only;” and, “the learned reject it as a school-boy’s play;” and then again, “it is a scholar’s play,” all agree?

Neal, alias *Smith*, alias *Rag*, was altogether an odd character. The nickname of *Rag*, puts me in mind of the frequent in-

attention to dress in studious persons. Those of both sexes are by their ruling regard naturally diverted from it. The female scholar is fonder of an elegant book than of a handsome gown, or perhaps than even of a handsome fellow: and a witty male one of a satire, than of a razor.

“ I am disappointed by that stroke of
 “ death which has eclipsed the gaiety of
 “ nations, and impoverished the public stock
 “ of harmless pleasure!”

A horrid anticlimax! But that is not the worst. Johnson, after his effusions of friendship to the manes of Garrick, could not hold back a Parthian kick of *harmless pleasure*, and a piece of affected contempt, engendered perhaps by Garrick's comparison of him with his own Prospero in the *Rambler*, even in the contemplation of death. Indeed he always treated him in such a manner as would tempt one to exclaim, *deliver me from such a friend as Johnson!* Perhaps, mortified with the indifferent reception of his *Irene*, he could not help transferring the

the ill taste of the people to disgust to Garrick, notwithstanding his friend's efforts in its favour. It will be always remembered that popular, as were Pope and Johnson, neither of them have furnished the theatre with a lasting play, that Dryden could make in a breath.

The ingenious author of the life of Chatterton observes, that " his imagination, like " Dryden's, was more fertile than correct ;" but, in the Doctor's opinion, Dryden's mind was not less correct than Pope's, though a victim to haste.

DUKE'S

LIFE is a precious morsel, in which there is however a piece of wittiness;—"an age when he, that would be thought a wit, was afraid to say his prayers."

KING'S

KING'S

LIFE shews his sence, in preferring ease
and an apple-pye, to the jargon and
iniquity of law.

SPRAT

AFFORDS an instance of a man being furnished with a bishoprick by means of his acquaintance with Cowley, who, himself, was almost starving.

LORD

LORD HALLIFAX'S

LIFE declares the disposition of the biographer to a Whig patron of literature, who is enumerated among the most eminent poets, yet is despised. One good line he nevertheless produced ;—

“ He hung upon their rear, or lighten'd in their face.”

PARNELL.

PARNELL.

“ **T**HE description of *barrenness*.” I have
often wondered at the smallness of
Irish crops,—

“ And half an acre’s corn is half a sheaf.”

His verses to Pope are very good.

GARTH.

GARTH

WAS a good poet, a good physician,
and an honest man; and more than
merely and passively so.

ROWE.

ROWE.

“ **T**HE character of *Lothario* seems to
 “ have been expanded by Richard-
 “ son into *Lovelace* ; but he has excelled his
 “ original, in them oral effect of his fiction.”

Calista's soliloquy is fine. *Clarissa* is, I think, Richardson's master-piece, unless Clementina's simplicity, such as Richardson alone was capable of drawing, gives the palm to the story of *Grandison*, generally deemed beyond human nature ; yet in accomplishments, the *admirable Crichton* seems to have much exceeded him ; but then little is said of Crichton's virtues and the excellence of his heart.

As to Rowe's want of worth, it is to be hoped that he who knew how to seize the hearts of others, did not want one himself. As to his comedy of the *Biter*, though he had no teeth, still he might be a match for barking critics. Our author gives so
 high

high a character of his Lucan, that it seems inconsistent with his encomium of Pope's Homer, if it does not give Rowe the palm of translation.

ADDISON.

ADDISON.

IT seems that Addison was at four schools; Ambrosbury, Salisbury, Litchfield, and the Chartreux; enough to spoil the heads of most boys.

“ But Addison, who seems to have had
 “ other notions of a hundred pounds, grew
 “ impatient of delay, and reclaimed his
 “ loan by an execution.”

I am sorry our author has acquainted us with this report of such a man, but wish to think it a mistake, or misrepresentation. But he takes a delight in depreciating Addison's friendship to Steele, and indeed all friendship; and enlarging on his rapaciousness.

What inclines me to think this a mistake, is, that he mentions an execution as the first, instead of last, legal process; and,
 moreover,

moreover, were it true, the motive might be good.

“ Essay on the Georgicks, juvenile, superficial, and uninstruative.” Dryden was of a different opinion ; and so am I :—
A noble anticlimax.

“ In this poem is a very confident and discriminative character of Spenser, whose works he had never read.” This seems odd. Addison compliments Cowley in an admirable line of seven feet, or fourteen syllables ;—

“ And plays in more unbounded verse, and takes a nobler flight.”

“ While it was yet advanced no farther than the simile of the angel.”

It is striking to observe, the noble imitations to which two flights of the Psalmist ;
He came flying upon the wings of the wind,
XVIII. 10.—and *He maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind,*
CIV.

CIV. 3. have given rise : viz. the last couplet of this simile of Addison,—

“ And pleas'd the Almighty's orders to perform,
“ Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.”

In Dryden's *Ceyx and Alcyone*, from Ovid,—

“ And now sublime she rides upon the wind.”

Whence Pope borrowed,

“ Not God alone in the still calm we find,
“ He mounts the storm, and rides upon the wind.”

Chatterton has,

“ And rides upon the pinions of the wind.”

And the stale rogue, Gray, has,

“ With arms sublime that float upon the air.”

Addison and Pope seem to have had the XVIII. more especially in view ; but Shakspeare, in *Romeo and Juliet*, the CIV.

“ Bestrides the lazy-paced clouds,
“ And sails upon the bosom of the air.”

The description of this latter psalm is sublimer

limer than the other ; but Sternhold has versified the XVIII. much better, so that Dryden is said to have bestowed the highest commendation on his version, in which he seems to have been particularly inspired to describe the Supreme Being :—

“ On cherubs and on cherubims
 “ Full royally he rode,
 “ And on the wings of mighty winds
 “ Came flying all abroad.”

The opera of *Rosamond* has not so much reputation as it deserves. Sir John Hawkins observes, that the villainy of Clayton's music preponderated against the elegance and humour of the poetry.

The character given of it by Tickell is very just, for it contains much fine thought in an enchanting variety of numbers, but is dashed with Sir Trusty and Grideline.

“ Addison was frighted lest he should be
 “ thought a promoter of insurrection ; and
 “ the line was liquidated to *Britons*, at-
 “ tend !”

G

And

And yet, had Addison been a coward, he would have declined acceptance of the secretaryship to the regency, when Lord Bolingbroke's papers and office were sealed up; a situation at a time that will always mark his political consequence.

"That it" (the Drummer) "should have been ill received would raise wonder, did not we daily see the capricious distribution of theatrical praise,"—is a grain of Johnson's own consolation for himself. But the *Drummer*, though born before *Irene*, a nine days wonder, that had just time to cry, has survived it.

"This cannot be said of the few papers entitled the *Whig Examiner*."

Our author does full justice to this paper, written by Addison in answer to the *Examiner*, composed by the Tories. Of the "superiority of his wit" to that of his comrades in the *Spectator*, his part comparable to Diana's figure among her nymphs,

nymphs, or to a primary star in a constellation, is a proof.

“ It” (*Marriage*) “ neither found them
 “ nor made them equal.” I cannot think
 that Dr. Johnson would, on all occasions,
 yield to blood so great a superiority over
 brains, as is there implied. I am sorry so
 often to mention his worldly leaven which
 yet he could censure in Dryden. And even
 as to worldly circumstances; if his wife was a
 Countess,—Addison was a Secretary of State;
 an office at the shrine of which Lords can bow.

“ Every reader surely must regret, that
 “ these two illustrious friends, after so
 “ many years past in confidence and endear-
 “ ment, in unity of interest, conformity of
 “ opinion, and fellowship of study, should
 “ finally part in acrimonious opposition.”

Rather every reader will regret the en-
 tire misrepresentation of this affair;—not
 Steele, but Benson, wrote the *Plebeian*; and
 more than that, Steele spoke in favour of
 the bill in speeches now extant. It seems,

that Johnson and Hawkesworth, of whom no life is written, whilst Lowths has furnished only a skeleton of a pamphlet, were indeed no more than external friends; and we do not find a zealous panygeric of Hawkesworth after his death by Johnson, like Addison's by Steele. And why did not Johnson, who was a Tory, lament the acrimonious opposition of Oxford and Bolingbroke?

“ He demanded to be the first name in
 “ modern wit; and, with Steele to echo
 “ him, used to depreciate Dryden, whom
 “ Pope and Congreve defended against
 “ him.” *Spence.*

How true soever is this, Dryden, Pope, and Swift had all a keener or a rougher edge of wit, strictly so called. Addison's was generally triturated into elegance; and as he insinuates of great writers, his, like theirs, was Attic wit; that is, discourses through which a soul of thought is diffused; and his thoughts, as well as stile, were expanded into sentiment, and were indeed
 seldom

feldom forcible or powerful. They were not plain drams, but made into punch;—calomel was his phyfic, and sublimate was Dryden's. "Most wits will bespatter a friend when it bubbles," says Addison; but the tendernefs of his nature expreffed his feverity at all times, and he wore wit in a fcabbard.

"Of very extenfive learning he has given
"no proofs."

I do not pretend to judge of his learning. But in the *Spectator* only, he has exhibited conviction of his ftudies being far from confined to the claffics, ftonger than has his biographer in the *Rambler*. What degrees of his own learning his Dictionary may be fupposed to indicate, I cannot fay. In the *Spectator*, a fingle paper of Addison's is feen to contain a hiftory of a fcience in miniature. With what dexterity has he difsected the Beau's head, and Coquette's heart; and Fielding fpeaks of him as eminently learned.

"He had read, with critical eyes, the
G 3 "important

“ important volume of human life, and
 “ knew the heart of man from the depths
 “ of stratagem to the surface of affectation.”

Then surely he was qualified for politics, if not for an official politician ; and, from what is just after quoted from Steele, wanted nothing but courage to be a fluent speaker. I agree with our author in the expression, *the important volume of human life*, though Addison had not seen these *lives*. Important it is, but very disagreeable ; a volume that repels persons of high intellect from its contemplation, to seek solace and entertainment in scenes of romance ; that, after the reading of a page of that of which all pages are alike ; and more than ever now, that the intercourse of the world has been facilitated, and pride and selfishness destitute of a virtue, and polished barbarity have become universal, bidding wise men withdraw themselves to imaginary regions of peace and benevolence.

Of human life, vice is the current coin ; and, as Dr. Kelley observes, “ he who erects
 “ a sure

“ a sure edifice, must ground it on the
“ foolishness of mankind.” A certain foundation indeed, however the fantastic super-
structures may vary.

“ Of the next couplet, the first verse, be-
“ ing included in the second, is therefore
“ useless.”

If the latter of these lines,

“ 'Tis this that shakes our country with alarms,
“ And gives up Rome a prey to Roman arms,”

is construed into tautology, it is almost impossible to write a poem without it ; amplification and even repetition being beauties in poetry. The new ministry could not have desired a better conclusion, it tending to put a stop to the jars of party, and reconcile the nation to the peace.

“ Who that ever asked succour from Bac-
“ chus, was able to prevent himself from
“ being enslaved by his auxiliary.”

What is meant by *his auxiliary*, I know
G 4 not.

not. It is reported of the two friends, that Steele, who certainly had pleasantry, would entertain the company till he grew mellow; and that then Addison would take up the conversation. Generous liquors are of service to constitutions whose fluids want acceleration.

“ His delight was more to excite merriment than detestation; and he detects follies rather than crimes;” in which he also complied with his genius, more Horation than Juvenalian.

“ He has said, not very judiciously, in his character of Waller,”

“ Thy verse could shew e'en Cromwell's innocence,

“ And compliment the storm that bore him hence.

“ Oh! had thy Muse not come an age too soon;

“ But seen great Nassau on the British throne,

“ How had his triumph glitter'd in thy page.”

“ What is this but to say, that he who could compliment Cromwell, had been the proper poet for King William.”

Not to cavil at *had been*, for *would have been*,

been, it seems that our author, when he wrote this, entertained a tenderness for the Protector, our liberties and religion, though William and Mary, like Brutus, were constrained to sacrifice filial duty to patriotism. Indeed tender minds are unfit and incapacitated for public affairs in general, even for the office of a justice of peace. Be that as it may, the sentiment of Addison, in these lines, was but this: *If thy verse could shew such an usurper as Cromwell in a favourable light, in what bright colours wouldest thou have painted King William!* The first couplet ought not to be taken literally; it meaning no more than that Waller threw a glory on Cromwell, not that Addison intended a comparison between him and William; and all this Johnson very well knew.

“ That longs to *launch* into a nobler strain.”

Be the metaphor good or bad, the fabricator soon after *galloped*, *sung*, or *launched* himself into a place of three hundred a-year.

“ It is not easy to paint in song, or to
“ sing in colours.”

Our

Our author here strikes at the root of metaphor with a blunder stolen from Addison himself, in his remarks on a letter of Lord Bolingbroke. Poetry and Painting are sister arts: the business of both being description, they may be reciprocally used to figure and illustrate each other. Our author himself has these words, Vol. I. p. 235.—“ To put these materials to *poetical use*, is required an imagination capable of *painting nature*, and realizing fiction.” Every one can produce a hundred instances of metaphor more open to ridicule than this. Two pages ago, he talked of a *broken metaphor*. *What*, says a smart, *is a metaphor a faggot, or a fiddlestick?* By the way, *broken*, is a metaphorical epithet affixed to *metaphor*.

An attention to such hyper-criticisms would reduce all writings to lees. And it seems (see the sequel) extraordinary that an angel, of the agency of which kind of beings we have little or no idea, should in driving a storm, too much resemble a General's conducting a battle for a simile.

“ For

“ For not only Cato is vanquished by
 “ Cæsar, but the treachery and perfidious-
 “ ness of Syphax prevails over the honest
 “ simplicity of Juba ; and the sly subtlety
 “ and dissimulation of Portius over the ge-
 “ nerous frankness and openheartedness of
 “ Marcus.” *Dennis.*

But how does all this end ? In favour of
 the meritorious persons : and, the fate of
 Cato excepted, or rather the triumph of
 Cæsar, suicide being holden heroic by the
 Romans, the catastrophe was in a manner
 happy : on the whole, it is of a mixed na-
 ture. The soliloquy of Cato is an imitation
 of Hamlet ; and perhaps Hamlet’s was de-
 rived from Job, chap. iii. v. 17, 18, &c.

“ An instructor, like Addison, was now
 “ wanting (to precede the great Johnson)
 “ whose remarks being superficial, might
 “ be easily understood ; and being just,
 “ might prepare the mind for more attain-
 “ ments”—(for the sesquipedalia of our au-
 thor. Addison had the art of smoothing
 learning, by avoiding technical and hard
 terms,

terms, and captivating in a neat disshabille.

I may observe, that in all nice explanations, words should be used in their strict, proper sense, when possible; a figure of speech being the adoption of one ambiguity to explain another. Though Johnson deals out the praise of his predecessor essayist with a rather grudging hand, his character of him is altogether just, and not uncandid; and more favourable to his unaffected poetry than has been the general opinion thereof; and whatever suggestions he may have thrown out elsewhere, the *Spectator* will always have more readers than the *Rambler*, which, weighty as is its matter, perhaps falls short in animation and allurements, of the *Adventurer*. I am inclined to think that the *Spectators* have had more readers than the writings of Pope, or any whatsoever of their standing.

HUGHES.

HUGHES.

" **H**E judged skilfully enough of his own interest."

From what follows, it appears that this is ironical—Hughes was a Whig.

I should like to know if the Doctor himself knew what he meant by Mr. Duncombe's "*blameless elegance*."

" The character of his genius I shall transcribe from the correspondence of Swift and Pope."

Knowing the just stigma inflicted by Horace, *mediocribus poetis*, this choice of fixing Hughes's character cannot but be considered as injurious. It does not clearly appear what Swift meant by saying " he is too great a poet for me," which taken by itself might be deemed a compliment, and was the truth. Swift is no better than a dog-
grel

grel poet ; and Pope might have recollected that himself could not write a play. The character, it is true, of an *honest man*, is certainly highly estimable, and such an one as Hughes found the value of when on his death bed, when literary success was put in the scale with religious confidence. Our author remarks, that his " reputation was " so far advanced, that the public began to " pay reverence to his name." And he may be justly ranked with the second-rate genius's, such as Steele, Congreve, Prior, and even Addison ; and his contemners, Swift and Pope. There is a beautiful groupe of verses at the end of the fourth act of the *Siege of Damascus*, which were greatly relished by Quin :

" Think that ye all to certain triumph move ;
 " Who falls in fight, yet meets the prize above ;
 " There, in the gardens of eternal spring,
 " While birds of paradise around you sing,
 " Each with his blooming beauty by his side,
 " Shall drink rich wines that in full rivers glide,
 " Breathe fragrant gales o'er fields of spice that blow,
 " And gather fruits immortal as they grow :
 " In bliss extatic, your whole powers employ,
 " And ev'ry sense be lost in ev'ry joy."

I will

I will conclude the life of Hughes with noticing a very good observation of his on composing :—that when a piece has lain by for a while, the author, whose mind the thoughts have somewhat, but not entirely relinquished, will be enabled to judge of them himself impartially, and to revise them with advantage, especially to reform obscurities.

SHEFFIELD,

SHEFFIELD,

IN his answer both to King William and the priest, shewed a blunt honesty ; but I do not understand the latter about transubstantiation ; literature, though not Milton, is indebted to him as a noble student.

PRIOR.

PRIOR.

“ **H**E was perhaps willing enough to
 “ leave his birth unsettled, in hope,
 “ like Don Quixotte, that the historian of
 “ his actions might find him some illustri-
 “ ous alliance.”

This does not well agree with his own
 epithet, “ Nobles and Herald,”—which
 breathes a spirit of bravado against ances-
 try: and, in my opinion, the creator is
 more estimable than the inheritor of gran-
 deur; nothing beyond exemption from idi-
 otism being necessary for the latter.

“ There was now a call for writers, who
 “ might convey intelligence of past abuses,”
 &c.

At the time these *lives* were written, there
 seemed to be a call for writers to explore
 the reason why all the world almost had
 conspired against a nation which had spent

H

its

its blood and treasures in defence of the rights of mankind.

“ Whatever Prior obtains above mediocrity, seems the effect of struggle and toil. He has many vigorous, but few happy lines ; he has every thing by purchase, and nothing by gift ; he had no *nightly visitations* of the muse ; no infusions of sentiment or felicities of fancy.”

It requires such a judge as Dr. Johnson to make these discriminations ; who, on the whole, allows Prior wit, art, and laboured metre, but not genius : but if he had not the gift of poetical sleep, he had a considerable share in procuring repose to Europe, though he is unwilling to grant him either sentiment or passion. Henry and Emma made me weep. And, he being both correct and easy, the former admitted by Johnson, the latter by others, elegance must be confessed to be the result.

“ In his preface to *Solomon*, he proposes some improvements, by extending the sense

“ sense from one couplet to another, with
“ variety of pauses. This he has at-
“ tempted, but without success; his inter-
“ rupted lines are unpleasing, and his sense,
“ as less distinct, is less striking.” A motley
combination of rhyme with blank verse.

CONGREVE.

“ **L** ANGUOR of convalescence,” truly Johnsonian. Congreve’s noted declaration to Voltaire, has received the reprehension it deserves. However, Addison attributes his ceasing to write, as a mark of his prudence in knowing when to leave off. Indeed a mere gentleman, one of a smooth bag of pebbles proud of his *vis inertia*, is as insignificant a being as can be conceived.

“ His comedies have therefore, in some degree, the operation of tragedies; they surprize rather than divert, and raise admiration oftener than merriment.” That is, they are witty, but not humourous; but they hardly much resemble tragedies, unless in their baneful effect.

“ Looking tranquillity.” *Mourning Bride.*

Tranquillity is but a feeble word, and yet solemnity would not perhaps be a better.

——“ By

—————" By fate of war to prove
 " The victor worthy of the *fair one's* love."

To be sure the application of the ladies' epithet *fair*, to a heifer, unless an Europa, is hardly worthy of a polite gallant. Be that as it may, our author could not on a less favourable occasion than this, omit an opportunity of being merry on pastoral: indeed fable is ill adapted to the pathetic, and some of the lines quoted from Congreve are rough and uncouth, and the words of several of them intersected by the accent, as

" The hov'ring winds on down-y wings shall wait around,
 " And catch, and waft to for-eign lands the flying sound
 " Encompass'd all the ming-led mafs of seas and lands."

A mode not allowable but in Pindarics, if in them.

If our lexicographer had written, " He
 " sometimes retains what *would have been*
 " more properly omitted," instead of the
 jargon, " he sometimes retains what *were*
 " more properly omitted," it might have
 been as well or better.

BLACKMORE.

—“ **A**ND let it be remembered for his honour, that to have been
 “ once a school-master, is the only reproach
 “ which all the perspicacity of malice, animated by wit, has ever fixed upon his
 “ private life.”

This is a specimen of fine irony, severe as the animadversion may seem. The pride and folly of mankind, and of nominal Christians is such, that it is their supreme glory to mock and spurn the humility of him whose disciples they profess themselves, but with real contempt and hatred of him.

“ To this censure, may be opposed the
 “ approbation of Locke,” who hated poetry as much as do the inhabitants of Cheapside.

“ The rest of the *Lay Monks* seem to be
 “ (rather to have been) but feeble mortals,
 “ in

“ in comparifon with the gigantic Johnfon,
“ who yet, with all his abilities, and the
“ help of the fraternity, could drive the
“ publication but to forty papers, which
“ were afterwards collected into a volume,
“ and called in the title *A Sequel to the*
“ *Spectator*.”

These biographies form together the literary history of a century, which might be termed the golden one.

“ His account of *Wit*, will fhew with how
“ little clearnefs he is content to think, and
“ how little his thoughts are recommended
“ by his language.”

This cenfure, though fevere, is juft. As he at one time wrote in the ftile of the merchant and trader, fo in this defcription of genius, rather than of *wit*, he discovers the phyfician. Poor Blackmore, like Dennis, had the luck to be a whetftone as well as a wit.

“ One paffage, which I have found al-
H 4 “ ready

“ ready twice, I will here exhibit, because
“ I think it better expressed than could be
“ expected from the common tenour of his
“ prose.”

As to the quotation alluded to: it is certain that many put confidence in an accidental profession of religion, without a sense of it, as they possess a thoughtless kind of love of their country ; the former calculated to the Romish religion, and the latter to French government.

FENTON.

FENTON.

“ *MARIAMNE* is written in lines of ten syllables, with few of those redundant terminations which the drama not only admits but requires, as more nearly approaching to real dialogue.”

This corresponds with my idea. With these lines, consisting of eleven syllables, Shakespeare abounds more than Milton; of which the following in Cato are examples:

“ The wide, th’ unbounded prospect lies before me;
“ But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.”

“ Steele, in some parts of the *Guardian*, had praised Ambrose Philips.” This seems to be a small mistake; all the papers on pastoral poetry, except one by Pope in his own praise, being by Tickell.

GAY.

GAY.

“ **H**IS *What d’ye call it*, a kind of mock “tragedy, in which the images “were comic, and the action grave.” From disproportion always proceed burlesque, not seldom nearly the consequence of common things invested with pompous diction in the Rambler.

“ His friends persuaded him to sell his “share.”—With all due submission to the lexicographer, I apprehend that *endeavoured to persuade*, would have been more proper; *persuaded to*, being nearly tantamount to *prevailed with*.

“ For this he is said to have been promised a reward, which he had doubtless “magnified with all the wild expectations “of indigence and vanity.”

Why would Johnson always delight to
degrade

degrade genius, and render it the contempt of rich fools?

“ His *fables* seem to have been a favourite work ; for, having published one volume, he left another behind him.”

Experience has proved them to be excellent, and the introduction to them is admirable. From the latter part of them, it seems strange that the neglect of a court should have rendered him miserable, whose character entitled him to look down on courtiers as the buzzing insects of a day. Query, Was the humorous paper in the *Adventurer*, concerning an author's reading his tragedy to a great person, aimed at Gay? The form of his fables is, I think, original, and, like the *Beggar's Opera*, they will hardly be equalled.

He was not a great, but a witty, adroit, various, and original writer. It is observable that Pope has remarked his simplicity, and Johnson his vanity. Our author, intent upon rhodomantade, also denominates

nates him a writer adapted to barbarians, because of his plaintive pastoral of *Dione* : but perhaps he who prefers the world as it is man's, to it as it is God's, is rather a barbarian.

LANSDOWN,

LANSDOWNE,

IT may be perceived from our author's mean opinion of him, was a lover as well as lord : as to his poetry, I have a better opinion of it than our author, whose mind was, in some respects, as narrow as a crane's neck.

YALDEN.

YALDEN.

“ **W**HEN Namur was taken by King
 “ William, Yalden made an ode.
 “ There was never any reign more cele-
 “ brated by the poets than that of Wil-
 “ liam, who had very little regard for song
 “ himself, but happened to employ minif-
 “ ters who pleased themselves with the
 “ praise of patronage.”

This is a most pungent sting of con-
 tempt; but it is certainly shameful to attri-
 bute good actions to worthless motives, and
 as foolish for Johnson to declare himself a
 Jacobite in every page. As to his laughing
 at poetry, he had indeed no relish for any
 but didactic; and had he been apprehen-
 sive that ever a golden age (let no punster
 remind us of his pension) would be on earth,
 how fervently would he have prayed to be
 delivered from it; and how insipid and
 wretched must he have deemed the con-
 dition of Adam and Eve before their fall,
 when

when neither taverns, venison, nor slander,
were in being!

The last *and* in the last paragraph of
Yalden's life is superfluous.

TICHELL.

YALDEN.

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 “ William, Yalden made an ode.
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 “ brated by the poets than that of Wil-
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Yalden's life is superfluous.

TICKELL.

TICKELL.

“ **T** O Tickell, however, cannot be re-
“ fused a high place among the
“ minor poets.”

If by the term *minor poet*, the quantity of his poetry is meant, he is properly so called ; but if the quality is thereby understood, it is a disparagement.

HAMMOND'S

LOVE-complaints were precious food for the maw of Johnson, who in mumbling them did not, however, perceive that the alternate quatrain has a solemnity suited to elegy.

SOMERVILLE

WAS not likely to be followed far by him over fix-bar gates ; but has started a Savage in his hunt.

SAVAGE.

SAVAGE.

“ **T**O be humane, generous, and can-
 “ did, is a very high degree of me-
 “ rit in any case; but those qualities de-
 “ serve still greater praise, when they are
 “ found in that condition which makes al-
 “ most every other man, for whatever rea-
 “ son, contemptuous, insolent, petulant,
 “ selfish, and brutal.”

If this severe animadversion, too charac-
 teristic of all mankind, is peculiarly appli-
 cable to players, some shew of reason may
 perhaps be assigned, possibly, that conti-
 nually conversant with fictitious misery and
 calamity, they may lose conception of the
 reality; and thus tragedians may resemble
 butchers; and Savage might be well ashamed
 of being enrolled with them, cursed as he
 was moreover with the twin curses of hu-
 manity, pride, and poverty, in their full
 extent. From what cause soever proceeds,
 if the censure is just, this callousness: To

the generous humanity, sufficient to cover a multitude of sins, of two players, Mr. Wilkes and Mrs. Oldfield, let me add the name of Mr. Samuel Foote; whose noble conduct towards the arch impostor, Charles Price, stamps him, always acknowledged admirable for his wit and ingenuity, and highly estimable, as he is now known to have been for his learning, and amiable for his unsuspicious sincerity, the certain criterion of a good mind, unacquainted with deceit, with the character of exalted Christianity. In the life of Price (written with a not unpleasant dry archness) it appears that Mr. Foote could forgive, and even befriend the man who villainously and brutally endeavoured to convert his confidence and kindness to his entire destruction.

“ He always himself denied that he was drunk, as had been generally reported.”

Then it must have been a duel with Sinclair and the maid. Drunkenness cannot indeed be generally admitted for an excuse for any crime: yet, if malice prepense, as
cannot

cannot be denied, constitutes the heinousness of every one, real drunkenness, in which the blood is warm, is a great mitigation in *foro conscientiæ*, for none will contend, *a priori*, that drunkenness is a crime equal to murder.

“ Good is the consequence of evil,” is a position of dangerous tendency, in which Johnson verged towards Mandeville. If indeed, by the present depravity of human nature, it cannot be but *offences must arise, woe be to him by whom they come*, since each individual is a free agent. And the suggestion that vice may be expiated by its own sufferings in this world, where it is triumphant is very dangerous.

“ That he sold so valuable a performance”—The Wanderer. »

Savage, accurate and negligent, sensible and foolish, was in an extraordinary manner at once careless about the present and the future, with a quick sense of both ; it being difficult to determine which he valued

lued most a good dinner or fame: so says Horace, *Carpe diem*; and *Exegi monumentum*.

He was kind to his perjured accuser, and ungrateful to a generous patron. He was precise and extravagant; tragical and capricious; employed on jollity and comma's; freaks and semicolons. Wit and prudence are not often united; far indeed from being united in him, yet with wit he combined minuteness. What a happy thoughtlessness did he possess; who could at ease entertain himself and his companions with pleasantry and gibes, when an empty pocket would have been continually in the thoughts of another.

“ So comes the reck'ning when the banquet's o'er:

“ The dreadful reck'ning, and men smile no more.”

was not anticipated by him.

“ He (Tyrconnell) was so much provoked
 “ by the wit and virulence of Savage, that
 “ he came with a number of attendants,
 “ that did no honour to his courage, to
 “ beat him at a coffee-house.”

It

It appears strange, that in such a country as this, such outrages should be heard of; and that the sufferer had better sit down quiet, than seek legal redress. This, however, was the case before the miraculous passing of Lord Mansfield's Privilege Bill; which, excellent as it is whilst it lasts, wants an amendment to render it completely efficacious; that where the jury give damages to a certain amount to be specified, the plaintiff should have, not nominal, but real costs of suit, with the option, however, for the defendant to have them taxed. This would at once be a check on the shameful impositions of attornies, and transfer the additional expence of ascertaining the costs, from the injured to the injurer.

“ The spirit of Mr. Savage, indeed, never suffered him to solicit a reconciliation.”

It is indeed difficult, especially for a gentleman, to live long with any degree of satisfaction in a state of dependance on a fellow-subject; an argument for monarchy

under which the meanest exciseman or soldier considers himself as the servant of none but a crowned head. Mankind are too wayward for each other to preserve a due medium: the superior will act the rigid churchman; and the inferior the stubborn puritan, and fancy affronts: says the poet,

“ Were I to curse the miscreant I hate,
“ Attendance and dependance be his fate!

Mr. Savage thought it necessary, to his own vindication, to prosecute him in the King's-Bench! A redress wanting to complete his ruin.

“ On a bulk, in a cellar, or in a glass-
“ house among thieves and beggars, was to
“ be found the author of the Wanderer.”
Would a curious enquirer determine that there are pleasures peculiar to every situation. Savage's life exhibits an example of surprizing irresolution and folly; yet not more surprizing than the improvidence of mankind in general, in regard to futurity, were not indeed the pressure on the material scenes almost irresistible in wordly want:

want : but what can excuse others? A niggard, being told how vain was his savingness, for that the fruits of it would be quickly squandered by his heir, made answer—that if his heir should have as much enjoyment in spending as he had in saving, it would be great. And doubtless the oeconomist; the master of his money, his morals, and himself; possesses a tranquillity, a basis of happiness unknown to him who floats awhile on the stream of dissipation, perhaps to sink, the derision and scorn of those who battered in his luxury and ruin, severer than poverty and hunger itself. Foolish as was Savage, his wasting his money at a tavern, was less so than giving it away to sharpers.

“ He attempted in Wales to promote a
 “ subscription for his works, and had once
 “ hopes of success; but in a short time afterwards formed a resolution of leaving
 “ that part of the country.”

He was volatile as mercury, and combustible as gunpowder; never to be at rest,
 and

and every minute liable to be blown up ; himself a wandering comet, who took not delight in his aphelion.

“ It is not without some satisfaction, that
 “ I can produce the suffrage of Savage in
 “ favour of mankind.

It is hard to conceive what should induce any one with eyes in his head, to think well of mankind in general.

This life is written in a very easy and entertaining manner ; it having been published many years ago, at which time Johnson was less quaint, atrabilious, conceited, and wayward than in his later years, and planned it less hastily than the lives of the poets. If he sometimes borders on tautology, it should be considered that in nice discriminations it is very difficult to avoid observations nearly tautologous, without circumlocutions and explanations which the reader must supply. However, this *apology for the life of Savage*, is by some considered as a blot in Johnson's character ; and indeed
 morals

morals are herein stretched to latitudinarianism, such as, it may be feared, granted himself a dispensation; for Johnson expected nothing of perfection either in writing or morality, and something was due to fellow-feeling with Savage. In this entertaining history, he rather talks than writes to the reader; directs him on the road to knowledge as if present; informs him of the characters and circumstances of the inhabitants as he passes along, and becomes his friend as well as companion, resembling the manner of Plutarch's colloquial-like style.

That part of my readers who are acquainted with Gregory's *Life of Chatterton*, can scarcely be able to peruse the life of Savage, without being disposed to draw some comparison between them. The author of *Love and Madness*, has indeed compared Chatterton with Mahomet. There is, I confess, this resemblance,—that they are both

both considered by many as impostors : but though Chatterton talked of becoming a methodist, most persons will be inclined rather to compare the cant of Mahomet and Cromwell.

It appears that Chatterton's too true profession, and even boast, that he was no Christian, was the source of the most poignant misery in this world, and the cause of his sad exit ; the effect of pride, a folly which, however surprisingly it takes its abode in men of capacity, cannot possibly reside in a breast occupied with the wisdom of the gospel—that sovereign and only antidote against the cup of adversity. It might be expected that genius should stem the torrent of empty and senseless vanity ; but this it is often found incapable of doing, unless fortified and cemented with religious philosophy ; of which the commixture of sense with weakness, and of fine parts with vulgarity in Chatterton, devoid of a dreg of economy, was a melancholy proof ; for his first starving, and afterwards poisoning himself, can hardly be denominated

nated " the strong consciousness of intellectual excellence," an expression of the biographer in alleviation of the pride attributed to him.

Mr. Gregory, on the supposition that Chatterton was the author or constructor of the poems under the name of Rowley, of which few persons entertain a doubt, places his genius above Dryden's, and below only Shakespeare's; thus allowing room for him between Shakespeare and Milton, and totally ejecting the latter from competition with the former.

The probable truth is, that Chatterton altered and supplied chasms at least, if he did not interpolate, some ancient MSS. among which he might find the name of Rowley, without which he would have hardly undertaken such a work. This is a salvo both for his veracity and genius, otherwise at variance; and also reconciles other circumstances. It is superfluous to observe, that in all things, and in mysteries among the rest, the truth usually lies in a medium.

medium. Moreover, in the accomplishment of his work, he might have unknown assistance, as Mahomet is said to have in the formation of the Alcoran: but the rapidity of the genius of Chatterton appears in one of his sprightly letters, in which he related that he suddenly composed several songs the same evening after the play.

It seems remarkable that Chatterton's abstinence from animal food and spirituous liquors, is alledged by this biographer as a proof of the preponderation of his virtues over his faults, though his profligacy towards women were acknowledged; especially if it be considered that ebriety is the best, surely only excuse for dissoluteness of that nature, as foolish as wicked.

Respecting the unhappy disappearance of this phenomenon, some argue that suicide is as bad, and worse, than murder, because precluding repentance; but it seems but an indifferent apology for murder, to commit it to repent of it. It appears a self-evident truth of analogy, till refined
away,

away, that persons have a better right to dispose of their own lives than of those of others, as they have of their own property. As to the cowardice of suicide, when Shakespeare makes Hamlet say, that "conscience makes cowards of us all," did he mean that it is cowardice in the miserable to forbear suicide? It is, however, unlucky that the finest soliloquy in the world, should suggest a false and dangerous application.

A man possessed of neglected genius may have some excuse for a desperate resentment against mankind, but not of complaint against his maker, who previously endued him with the most valuable property in his gift, if made a good use of; and which, had Chatterton exercised a small degree of prudence, would have furnished him whose first literary prospects were much better than Johnson's, with a competence, and at length, probably, with importance and fame, *the desire of which is the lasting disease of noble minds.*

It is but justice to Mr. Gregory to add,
that

that this piece of British biography is very instructive and entertaining, interspersed with excellent, sound, and new reflections, and discriminative specimens of an exact taste in poetry and criticism.

SWIFT.

SWIFT.

“THE advice and patronage of Sir William Temple.” Swift seems to have imbibed his unreasonable predilection for the ancients from Sir William; for in the *Battle of the Books*, he has omitted some of the most eminent of all British authors, alone sufficient to stagger the ancients, even in literature as distinguished from science.

Harley was a confounded queer dog.

“*Gulliver's Travels.*” As to the difficulty of criticising this remarkable production, it may be termed an original peculiar romance, of more merit than is here allowed it, whilst we may hope that there is room in the universe, though not on earth, for beings as just as the Houyhnmns. Swift's knowledge of sea terms appears in it extraordinary, and I wish that of mankind were exaggerated.

K

In

In regard to Stella, our author writes, not often the case, without conveying information.

“ His *Tale of a Tub* has little resemblance to his other pieces. It exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiousness of images, and a vivacity of diction, such as he afterwards never possessed, or never exerted. It is of a mode so distinct and peculiar, that it must be considered by itself; what is true of that, is not true of any thing else which he has written.”

This judgment is partly true and partly false. For, in my opinion, this *Tale* possesses a cant-burlesque phrase, not indeed to be found in any of Swift's writings, when he had formed a better style.

“ The practice of saving being once necessary, became habitual; and grew first ridiculous, and at last detestable. But his avarice, though it might exclude pleasure, was never suffered to encroach upon
“ his

“ his virtue.” How then could it be *de-
testable*?

“ Delany is willing to think, that Swift’s
“ mind was not much tainted with this
“ gross corruption before his long visit to
“ Pope.” He who was paramount to Swift
in nastiness, would be poorly characterised
by a comparison with a Hottentot, as Lord
Chesterfield denominated our author. In
many respects Johnson and Swift had re-
semblance : both doctors ; both Jacobites ;
both men of strong parts and authorita-
tive ; and both deaf to music and sentimental
poetry ; but I will not add that both min-
gled in a faction in order to initiate them-
selves to notice ; though it is too well known,
that merit alone is of little avail, except
that in conjunction with virtue and ho-
nesty, it will not fail to render a writer
odious. Johnson also followed Swift’s pre-
cept and example, in adopting a stile con-
sisting of *proper words in proper places*, sel-
dom figurative.

POPE.

“ **T**HIS, and this only, is told by Pope, “ who is more willing, as I have “ heard observed, to shew what his father “ was not, than what he was.” He defined his father, as Cowley did wit, and Congreve humour,—by negatives. It has since appeared that he was a linen-draper.

“ *Ode on Solitude.*” A discerning person, might have perceived from this Ode, that he was by nature a poet. Horace, and other ancients, have observed, that poets delight in solitude. Cowley says, that no woods are by them thought thick enough; and *Melancholy marked Gray for her own.* Pope’s early works, the versions of *Chaucer*, and of the first book of the *Thebais*, were also fine specimens. As to the heroic poem of “ *Aleander*,” I do not thank Atterbury for persuading him to burn it; which doubtless contained some blossoms of genius; and it is to be regretted, that dirt and jewels
were

were thrown away together, though it is probable that Pope might intersperse them among his other works,

Wycherley seems to have infected Pope with Cowley's constant stretch after wit; who was a full match for the antiquated scribbler at his own weapons; never was flattery thicker sown.

"He" (Cromwell) "was fond, and perhaps vain, of amusing himself with poetry and criticism; and sometimes sent his performances to Pope, who did not forbear such remarks as were now and then unwelcome."

How few there are that can bear the sincerity of friendship, especially if a little indiscreet! Indeed a spice of flattery, as of scandal, is almost necessary; and often spurs a man on to worthy attempts. Atterbury and Cromwell were too sincere, or possibly enviously sincere to Pope: the former blamed rhyme and his Shakespeare, his all; and Cromwell taxed him with stealing his

K 3 rondeau.

roundeau. Walfh was wifer ; and without flattering him injuriously, retained his regard and gratitude as long as he lived, with the credit of initiating fo great a poet ;

“ Such late was Walfh, the Mufe’s judge and friend,

“ Who knew full well to blame or to commend.”

Any one can bolt his thoughts at random : fomething is due to address, to the way of the world, and to human nature. If one bluntly tells his friend all he knows to his disparagement, his friend will be apt to fuppose, in addition to this mortification, that part is ftill fuppreffed. What is good-breeding but deference ; and deference but negative flattery ? Lowering ourfelves has the fame effect as raifing our companions ; but common good-manners are too great a facrifice for the felf-importance of perfons of thefe polished ages to make to fociety ; but the mortification of the humble and meek, is a neceffary ingredient in the practice of high breeding.

“ The fame year was written the *Essay on Criticifm* ; a work which difplays fuch ex-

“ tent

“tent of comprehension, such nicety of
 “distinction, such acquaintance with man-
 “kind, and such knowledge both of ancient
 “and modern learning, as are not often
 “attained by the maturest age, and longest
 “experience.”

These circumstances deserve investigation ; the generality of mankind are unqualified for reading or sound observation, but, like brutes, soon arrive at their *ne plus ultra*. Their heads are like ground frost-bound, unsusceptible of scientific impression. On the contrary, those of ingenious men are like cultivated lands, in which every plant takes root. Such seem to have minds that, to continue the allusion, resemble soils, that, according to some have seeds* interspersed

* The spontaneous growth of plants is, I think, generally rejected ; but I wish to be informed how plants, the seeds of which are not liable to be waisted by the wind, rise quickly on earth taken from the bottom of wells, &c. Some have recourse to new strata of earths accumulated at the flood ; a strange and unsatisfactory account, as plants spring from earths taken from different depths. Men must confess that they know nothing.

by nature at different depths, and withal endued with a superior faculty of intuition. But I observe that a principal mean by which sensible and virtuous persons by degrees arrive at the knowledge of mankind, is instinct, assisted by correspondencies in the minds of others; from the latter of which it comes to pass, that ill men become acquainted with the world sooner than good men. Locke well says, that the difference between the ratiocination of human kind and animals, consists in the ability of the former to combine, compare, and discriminate ideas wherein the vulgar fail; and are near akin to brutes and governed by custom; and on the proportions to a greater or less endowment with such power, knowledge much depends*.

With whatever contempt Dennis was treated, he was a *stumbling block and rock of offence*, as appears from Pope's and our au-

* For a very ingenious investigation concerning the acquisition of the knowledge of mankind, see an account of Whitaker's observations on Mary Queen of Scots, in the English Review for July 1787.

thor's frequent occasion to mention him. In truth, he was a man of learning and of acute criticism; with a large share of envy and malignity. His taste exposed him continually to the vexation of not being pleased with the writers of those times; but nobody can deny, if humour arises from the *representation of images in odd circumstances and uncommon lights*, that, with all his dullness, he had some share of it.

“What is this wit?—

“Where wanted, scorned; and envied where acquir'd.”

There are two duplicities in the line, which may be both made sense or nonsense, as they are taken by the right or wrong handle. It is plainly meant that those who had not wit, scorned it (or rather pretended to scorn it) in others; and that those who had it, were envied for it. But by taking it the wrong way, it might be made to mean, that those scorned the self-possession of it, who had it not; and that they envied it in themselves, who had it. So that the latter part is equally exceptionable with the

the former, were either so. As to the rest; after Pope had described Dennis as

“ Staring tremendous with a threat’ning eye,
“ Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry.”

Dennis was about even with him in calling him “ a downright monkey.”

“ From this account, given with evident
“ intention to raise the lady’s character, it
“ does not appear that she had any claim
“ to praise.”

I am displeased to see the author of the *Rambler* a friend to monasteries, though indeed religion may be better in a bad shape than in none at all. Hasty and culpable was the lady undoubtedly; but it ought to be considered, that no person ever has been or can be happy against violent inclinations, with constancy to a forced partner for life.

It is generally allowed, that parents, and perhaps guardians, should have a negative voice; but this is not confirmed by the marriage-

marriage-act, not even to parents when the parties become of age. And what power soever either the one or the other may naturally or legally possess, they ought to exert it no longer than to discover whether the parties are really engaged by a settled affection, which none can sever without sacrilege to nature, or only by fancy or caprice. To those on whom love has made a deep impression, nothing but its object can give happiness or peace of mind; considerations indeed that weigh little with the family-pride of parents. Indeed the arguments *for* and *against* have been so often adduced, that it is impossible to add to them, I will therefore draw the matter to this point; that an indulgence of passion may be attended with happiness, but that the disappointment of it cannot.

“ He seems to have done only that for
 “ which a guardian is appointed; he en-
 “ deavoured to direct his niece till she
 “ should be able to direct herself.” This
 is, to be sure, something to the purpose;
 yet

yet amorous fury is too dangerous to be pent up. Can a foreign country cure it? *Can madness with reason agree? Can love be controuled by advice to wait years, ages to them, of uncertainty?* O Johnson! thou didst not learn this of Shakespeare.

This poem, and the epistle of *Eloise to Abelard*, are replete with poetical fire, and strike the imagination with a captivating horror. A person endued with a true relish of poetry can never be tired of reading them—

“ Clouds interpose, waves roar, and winds arise.”

Pope's pathetic poetry has certainly a charm hardly to be equalled; to which Tickell's elegy on Addison has, however, much resemblance; and the lines quoted by our author from the *Mourning Bride*, are of the same class; and we may observe, that he has confessed the efficacy of religious verse in these words;—“ The mixture of religious hope and resignation, gives an elevation and dignity to disappointed love, which images merely natural cannot bestow.”

As

As to the mighty eulogium on the *Rape of the Lock*, that "he had now exhibited boundless fertility of invention," its machinery is but an ingenious expansion of that in Shakespeare's *Tempest*.

"The superiority of Pope is so ingeniously dissimulated, and the feeble lines of Philips so skilfully preferred, that Steele, being deceived, was unwilling to print the paper lest Pope should be offended." It becomes not me to pronounce on this matter; but I believe that most readers have been all along deceived. As to *feeble lines*, does any one expect others from rustics?

As to Pope's verses to Jervais "betraying his ignorance of painting," their generality might, one would have thought, have exempted them from that; and Dr. Warton's opinion is much different.

"He that runs against time, has an antagonist not subject to casualties."

This

This curious remark puts me in mind of a proverbial saying, which attended to, would have prevented a thousand from ruin; and which, with the addition of *apparently*, renders it always practicable; and I strongly recommend to the reader, that he may not complain of the price of these remarks,—*never defer till to-morrow, what may be apparently as well done to-day*. This, with method in accounts, could not often fail to procure fortunes to men in business. Horace has some verses to this purpose;—

Sic mihi tarda fluunt ingrataque tempora quæ spem, &c.


It is by perseverance, not snatches, that steady Mr. Trot, who may be compared to time, gets money. A foot pace is preferable to a gallop, in which the rider is likely to be thrown; which the Dutchman well knows. It is the hound, not the greyhound, that catches the hare at the long run; and both in composing and reading, intervals are necessary; in the former, to look round and wait for ideas; and in the latter, to relieve the mind lest she become jaded and moped, and pleasure cease;
wherein

wherein business and letters differ. A person need not be always in his closet to become a scholar or an author, nor should he; but he may always have a pencil about him, that he may not forget his fugitive ideas, or be revolving them in his mind to his own anxiety and disgust of company. As farthings and pence accumulate to pounds, words accumulate to pages, and thoughts to volumes: but the progress of the fancy, the infinite-like operations of the mind, are not like to material mechanism, keeping a regular pace.

Mr. Craggs's offer of providing for Pope, was noble.

"That wrath which *hurl'd* to Pluto's gloomy reign."—

curling souls is a remarkable expression.

"Apollo  awful ensigns *grace* his hands."—

It seems that *grac'd*, was first written. The arbitrary promiscuous use of the present and preterite tenses, is very frequent and convenient at least. Lord Kaimes has a good observation, that, in a paragraph, the
use

use first of the present, and afterwards of the past, is a kind of anticlimax.

The eight lines beginning with " But " Pallas"—are pointed wrong throughout, but are very fine.

" High on his helm celestial lightnings play,"
is extremely poetical ; also,

" Crown her hero with distinguish'd praise,"
though plain language, has, like many parts of scripture, a natural intrinsic sublimity,

I think that in

" A flood of glory *bursts* from all the skies."

Bursts, how poetical soever, hardly well agrees with the admirable still scene.

" It is not likely that Hallifax had any
" benevolence to Pope ; it is evident that
" Pope looked on Hallifax with scorn and
" hatred."

Why should Pope look with scorn and hatred on a nobleman who had raised himself

self to eminence, and then became the patron of letters? for he wrote to a third person that he had his Lordship's patronage.

“ In all this there was no hypocrisy ;
 “ for he confessed that he found in Addison something more than in any man ;”
in the awkwardest man breathing, according to Chesterfield.

I wonder not that our author should be so severe on Pope's grotto ; especially as in the highest reach of art, he had converted an inconvenience to an advantage. He relates his wish for a statue, in some verses such as those for which he testified his fondness. The following translation, which he mentions, has something inimitably soothing and delightful, and is, I think, superior to the Latin ; and I fear not to risk my opinion, that our language is susceptible of more tenderness and pathos than either the Latin or Greek, which have nothing to come up to our *ab's* ! and *ob's* ! I allude to

L

“ Nymph

“ Nymph of the grot, these sacred springs I keep,
“ And to the murmurs of the water’s sleep ;
“ Ah, spare my slumbers, softly tread the cave,
“ And drink in silence, or in silence lave !”

I know not whether others, like me, set
their affections on pieces of writing so as
sometimes to disrelish alterations even for
the better, and can thus lay an equal claim
to constancy. It is hence perhaps that I
prefer

“ Whoe’er thou art, ah ! gently tread the cave,
“ Ah ! bathe in silence, or in silence lave.”

I have seen it, though *bathe* and *lave* are
too like ; I think it would be better,

Ah ! spare my slumbers, softly tread the cave ;
Ah ! drink in silence, or in silence lave.

Repetitions have sometimes a sweet charm.

“ He grew dexterous by practice, and
“ every sheet enabled him to write the
“ next with more facility. The books of
“ Fenton have very few alterations by the
“ hand of Pope.”

It requires perhaps a better judge than
I am,

I am, to determine which preponderates, Addifon's pre-eminence in prose, or Pope's in verse. But it seems extraordinary that Fenton's and Broome's versification should equal their master's; and I do not perceive that Parnell's *Frogs and Mice* is unequal. I have heard Addifon's critique on Milton named as the best that ever was, except Spence's on the *Odyssey*.

“ I have heard of an ideot, who used to
 “ revenge his vexations by lying all night
 “ upon the bridge!” What means this?
 That Pope was an ideot?

“ I know not whether there does not
 “ appear something more studied and arti-
 “ ficial in his productions than the rest,
 “ except one long letter by Bolingbroke,
 “ composed with all the skill and industry
 “ of a professed author.”

Pope speaks of himself as throwing out
 in his letters at random; as may seem to
 some to have been the case, except in one

pretty long one of his to Addison, to whom he confesses an inclination to shew off. I believe women of education more ready at their pen, as well as tongue, than men. Lady Mary Wortley Montague's letters are written with exemplary fluency and carelessness.

“ —But having afterwards discovered, or been shewn, that the *truth* which subsisted *in spite of reason* could not be very clear.”—

On this a *certain allusion* may be readily imposed.

“ Croufaz's *Examen de Pyrrhonisme*.”—Fatalism is indeed a species of scepticism; that is, it may be so resolved or construed. The assertion amidst the enormities of the world, that *whatever is, is right*, though our author himself, no great metaphysician, sometimes half-inclined to Mandevillianism, is contradictory to the senses: but *fatalism* may be taken by the other handle, and *whatever*

whatever is, is wrong, be equally extracted from it. Warburton's character, of traits a kin to Johnson's own, is finely drawn, exhibiting the spirit of genius, fervid, active, searching, and grasping.

“Pope never afterwards”—What sentiments are these? Johnson, whilst he damps the spirit of those who would attempt to mend the manners of the times by exposing them, attributes the satires of Pope, though on the Tory-side, to vile motives: it is then reasonable to suppose that Johnson himself had no better for his two translations of Juvenal, his *Ramblers*, &c. But is it not contradictory to common sense, and the nature of things, to suppose that just censure has no effect, and contributes not to the accumulated code of human morals*? Indeed it seems that Johnson was a strange compound of inconsistency, and had the fortune to have too much care taken of his writings left behind him.

* See the *Adventurer*, No. 137.

“ Pope consulted the modern writers of
“ Latin poetry.”

There is a great advantage in an assemblage of writers in a language known to all, like the Latin. Such a fraternity contain within themselves a universal republic; a name indeed well applied to letters in general, wherein different countries, ranks and degrees, lords, women, and ploughmen, are, as in love and death, blended into one common mass, tending withal to political republicanism.

“ He should therefore have suffered the
“ pamphlet to flutter and die, without confessing that it stung him.”

Johnson, with sense too formal, heavy and phlegmatic for a poet of an high class, wrote one tragedy, *Irene*, which, though not unpoetical, and though *got up*, as the term is, with great eclat by his contemned friend, Garrick, contained so little of the *vis dramatica*, so little action, and that little horrible, that it fluttered nine nights, and then

then died, like Cibber's pamphlet: *illine hæ lacbrymæ*, and his contempt of all players, as well as Cibber, whose head (to do him justice) was adorned with laurel, his forehead cas'd with brass, and, as our author would represent all players, his heart with stone. Whenever Johnson left the beaten track of thought, it was through affectation: as when he affirmed, a person who is afraid of any thing, or who goes to bed before midnight, to be a scoundrel. Be this as it may, he never wrote better than in this acute account of Pope's ill-judged and contrived vengeance against Cibber.

“ Let no man dream of influence beyond
 “ his life.” What a remark! though not destitute of truth, and that perhaps which made our author so fond of life. Even Charles V. found himself dead whilst living; yet Christina, whose geuius was of different cast, was personally remembered longer:

“ 'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be”—

is a verse of Pope himself.

In regard to the want of talents of conversation, said to have been the case with Dryden, Pope, Addison, &c. the Duke of Buckinghamshire has this line on Pope:

“ A good companion, and as firm a friend.”

and Pope himself has this on Addison;—

“ Born to converse, and write, and live with ease.”

One is apt to imagine these reports of those ready wits, the offspring of envy; as to plague Garrick it was given out, and by his friend, that he could not put on the gentleman; the very firing together with his desire of the reputation of dancing, to which his heart most vibrated, that which *circum præcordia lussit*. Eminent persons are sure to be thus tiezed, to have some stigma entailed, some spot affixed to their splendour, that it may not be totally insupportable to others, or to themselves. So Cowley, the author of the *Mistress*, was afraid to declare his passion; and Lord Mansfield, the oracle of the law, must be unacquainted with it as long as he lived. But we should not be too ready to censure Johnson for
want

want of candour ; who, if he reprobated his own father for his beggary, condemned Addison for casting the dirt of poverty at the Pretender.

“ But the truth is, that such were simple
“ friendships of the *Golden Age*, and are
“ now the friendships of children.”

Golden Age at last !—To see the sacred name of friendship treated thus, is monstrous and abominable. Hawkesworth, in his old age, wrote the introduction to Cooke’s *Voyages* ; the condemned passage of which is no more equivocal than some of the maxims inculcated in these *Lives*, with which they are tinged throughout, and rendered the school of that which the world calls *what’s what*, rather than of virtue: still the observations on Pope’s letters are in the main, just ; which yet I like much, though Gray’s are said to be the best our language affords. A few pages after, we find our author defending the manners of mankind, on whose friendliness he had been so curiously descanting, and representing
friendship

friendship in such colours, that henceforward none will like the accusation, but every sensible man will be ambitious of the character of a hypocrite, a Mandeville, and a Machiavel. Churls may indeed withdraw their thoughts from worldly greatness, but wise men, who know what's what, are more forward to be slaves. Who can describe the fascinating charms of the notice of great fools? The fun of riches and grandeur is not less dazzling to mortal eyes than the luminary above; and those who would avoid its influence, must scarcely open their eyes: and if they fly into retirement, it is odds that they still find greatness in some shape, probably in a focus of oppression, where the inhabitants are too thin to obstruct its rays. So that some are indeed compelled to think of that which they in truth despise. Those who think to live independent and unmolested of wealth, the god of this world, will generally find themselves mistaken. Incense or slavery are the hecatombs greatness exacts at its shrine, and the world is ready to make the sacrifice. Our author who was but partially acquainted

acquainted with mankind, whom he contemplated through the medium of smoke, too much regarded the greatness, as it is called, of man, whose sphere of action is but a point, and whose life is a span, as really important: though the Heathen philosophers had told him that nothing is great the contempt of which is greater; and tho' Cooper says, that they whose ambition is earthly, are cold and dead in regard to heavenly; that they who worship man have no room in their souls for the shrine of their Creator, their dull and microscopic minds being incapable of any object but *little greatness*. Whether Pope's mind was really great, is another question. Johnson's was not, unless he was an hypocrite inverse. He tells us (p. 158) that "indeed, it must
 " be some very powerful reason that can
 " drive back to solitude him who has once
 " enjoyed the pleasures of society." That is, to induce a person to *retire* from the world as it is man's, into it as it is God's. Yet our author an adorer of monasteries!— O Johnson! thy vulgar notions, and thy palliatives, pardon me, are to me disgusting.

And

And what was the society thou wast so fond of? Not that of wits surely; for with " what degree of friendship wits might " live, very few were so much fools as to " enquire." Was it one wherein trifling compliances are substituted for real benefits, and not one virtue resides? Was it a smooth polished surface, in the vain mirror of which men smile and smile and are villains? And I do not implicitly subscribe to the assertion, that " of things that terminate in human life, the world is the " proper judge; that to despise its sentences, if it were possible, is not just; and " if it were just, is not possible;"—for I am not sure that it is consistent with my catechism. In regard to the pleasures of society; humane persons (and Johnson was himself, in many respects, eminently so, a noble quality though exerted in treating beggars with gin) will steal a thought from it to the unutterable miseries and calamities of the earth; to disease and hunger, rapine and outrage, anguish and torments, with which it abounds.

The

The * following pages of strictures on Pope's character are of another cast; yet that geniuses are "always endeavouring more than they can do," seems hypothetical; for I believe that writers of genius are sometimes satisfied, charmed, and enamoured of their productions.

Our author proceeds to describe Pope's independence and exemption from laureat drudgery, in a fine vein of pleasantry; and "he never exchanged praise for money, nor opened a shop of condolence and congratulation," is a stroke deserving of quotation. But surely the assertion that "when Dryden had no pecuniary interest, he had no further solicitude," wants qualification, spoken of one so really sensible of the worth of poetry and literature: and "Pope had perhaps the judgment of Dryden," might, some may think with more propriety, have been inverted; however, the discriminative parallel between these

* How could he despise those *whom he lived by pleasing*, is grammatically ill expressed, being complicated.

two poets is excellent, and this and the critique on *Paradise Lost*, are inferior to no parts of this Biography; and the parallel wherein, however, he uses the epithet *velvet*, in a manner in which he condemns it in Gray, is closed with a modesty and deference not very familiar to Johnson. The criticism on the translation of Homer is also ingenious, and, it may be, sound. Homer may perhaps be said to be rendered by Pope what he would have rendered himself had he lived in Pope's days: yet Pope may have carried elegance too far; and I think there is an unrivalled Homeric simplicity in the latter part of Dryden's first Book; and indeed I know not whether after all Addison did not say rightly, that Tickell has more of Homer than has Pope. But Johnson's candour can never hold long; for he says Pope's, that is, Broome's notes, were intended to swell the size of the work.

“ That the *Messiah* excels the *Pollio*, is no
 “ great praise, if it be considered from
 “ what original the improvements are de-
 “ rived.”

Does


Does this perfectly agree with the doctrine of our author and the orthodox critics, that religious subjects are unadapted to poetry; from which opinion, however, I beg leave to dissent? Untruths, our author has observed, are apt to lead their broachers into inconsistency. What he says of the "dignity of *ambition*," concerning the *unfortunate lady*, is a quibble on the word.

"Beauties of this kind" (of adapting the fount to the sense) "are commonly fancied; "and when real, are technical and nugatory, not to be rejected, and not to be solicited."

Verse itself is in a manner technical.—Johnson, without any ear, should not have been forward to decide on this point. However, he does not deny an analogy between the currency of verse and motion. If he had I might have silenced him with

"And run upon the *sharp* wind of the North."

"Flies o'er the unbending corn," is heavy instead of swift; but "skims along the
"main,"



"main," is precipitate;—so that the whole of the line well represents one getting up and then running. In page 187, *there*, or the like, is wanting at the close of a paragraph to complete the sense, at "mischief."

"Perhaps neither Pope nor Boileau, &c." —Our author is too apt to set the welfare of this life in competition with eternity; and here inculcates, that the trifling and whimsical vexations occasioned by women, are more noxious than the laziness, gluttony, hypocrisy and ambition of a scandalous clergy. Yet those are but the petty occurrences of life; whereas clerical villainy saps the foundation of all happiness here and hereafter.

Pope's assertion in his letter to Mr. Bridges is exactly in the spirit of Johnson, that "men never approve of any others' sense, but as it squares exactly with their own." Still it is to be hoped, that all candour and patience of truth is not entirely banished by self-conceit.

The

The *Essay on Man* is the doctrine of fatalism: yet the “way the twig is bent, the tree’s inclin’d,” is a contrary position.

If Voltaire’s *Candide* seems to bear hard on the goodness of providence, it was perhaps the result of one extreme begetting another. Of paradoxes, the former part of the twenty-second verse of the third chapter of Genesis seems to present one; as the knowledge of good and evil may be deemed a fortunate circumstance. Yet may it not be resolved thus? That before their fall, Adam and Eve knew not, were unacquainted with the mixed condition of the world ensuing thereon; but had experienced nothing but good, unsophisticated with evil. Or by the *knowledge of good and evil*, may perhaps be signified the *conceit and presumption of such knowledge*. As to the latter part of this verse, it is beyond my resolution; for to interpret it, that mankind, how brutal soever and *like the beasts that perish*, will not be immortal; or that the wicked will not be so, though a seemingly desirable thing; and that *many*

M

are

are called, but few chosen, with some few other texts, may be understood in such a sense, seems heterodox and rash. And that Mrs. Piozzi's expression of our author's excellence beyond *perishable beings*, is to be so understood, is an idea still more extravagant.

Concerning the acute hypercriticisms on on Pope's *Epitaphs*, which are properly no part of this biography, I will, however, ask how our author knew that "peace to thy gentle shade," was fiction? and add one or two small remarks.

In the last line of the epitaph on Fenton, the poet says that he

"Thank'd Heaven that he had liv'd, and that he dy'd."

Now Terence tells us not to believe a woman when dead, but has not informed us concerning the credit due to a dead man returning thanks for dying. In criticising that on Sir Isaac Newton, it is discovered that *night* and *light* are too nearly allied.

As

As I am fond of repeating excellence, I am convinced that the reader will not be displeased at my setting down that of Ben. Johnson, which alone would have rendered him immortal, though the name of the lady is not recited ;—

Underneath this marble hearse
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sydney's sister, Pembroke's mother.
Death, e'er thou hast kill'd another,
Fair and virtuous, good as she,
Time shall throw his dart at thee.

Of these six lines it is almost criminal to complain of the conclusion of the sense at the third line, the half of the piece. There were originally six more lines as follows, in the last of which the thought is somewhat far fetched :

Marble piles let no man raise
To her name ; for after days
Some kind woman, born as she,
Reading this, like Niobe
Shall turn statue, and become
Both her mourner and her tomb.

To anticipate a little: this charming piece puts me in mind of Ambrose Philips's incomparable translation of the two fragments of Sappho, which our biographer has omitted to notice, not because he could not say any thing good of them, but for the contrary reason, in conjunction with two others; that the subject was love, and Philips was a Whig; and of Atterbury's fine translation of the third Ode of the fourth Book of Horace, which yet is not faultless. The first line of the fifth stanza, though very beautiful, is a little defective, in that the emphasis, without some exertion in reading, falls on *the*. In the first line of the last stanza, *ease* is evidently used, not for the sense but rhyme: and to "dying accents raise," is, I think, obscure to those unacquainted with the original. The meaning is, that the goddess can raise the music of fishes to that of dying swans, which is indeed none at all.

Our author has observed, that according to Dr. Warton, in his *Essay on the Genius and writings of Pope*, that poet had consulted
the

the mystic writers, a class totally different and contradictory to the mysterious; the former being of a mercurial, the latter of a leaden genius. In a conjectural view of the mystics, I shall only add, that as there is a false enthusiasm and a true, so there is probably a false mysticism and a true; and that reason should be the mediator to both, lest enthusiasm should run into extravagance on the one hand, or immoveable orthodoxy into sluggishness on the other; and similarly, lest faith should either run into an allegorical labyrinth, or, on the contrary, be immersed in a dead letter. I know not whether I myself ought to be deemed a mystic, were I to attribute coincidences not infrequently regarded as plagiarisms, to the agency of invisible beings, which might possibly give rise to the creation of the Muses, &c. Certain it is, that writers have been accused of stealing from authors whom they have never read.

THOMSON.

“ **A**N enumeration of examples to prove
 “ a position which nobody denied,
 “ was from the beginning superfluous, and
 “ must quickly grow disgusting.”

True; but was not our author himself actuated by disgusting dislike to the very liberty in question? at least, had not his principles such a tendency? It seems certain, that they would never have loosened the shackles of any tyranny or superstition.

“ The benevolence of Thomson was fervid, but not active. He would give, on all occasions, what assistance his purse would supply;” (a noble character indeed! and I believe poets may challenge all mankind for generosity;) “ but the offices of intervention, or sollicitation, he could not conquer his sluggishness sufficiently to perform;”—seems, if we may believe

believe Mrs. Piozzi, an exact portrait of of Johnson himself, who likewise seems to have been like Thomson, "conscious of "his own character." And let me observe, that a person cannot be so much blamed for a carelessness towards others exemplified in his own affairs; that even a neglect of religion is in some measure excusable by that of worldly concerns.

"The gaiety of *Spring*, the splendour of " *Summer*, the tranquillity of *Autumn*, and "the horror of *Winter*." This is succinct and beautiful; and yet the writer of these remarks prefers the horrors of Winter, especially when aggravated by a rough ocean. It is true, that of the scenes, shipwrecks are the natural consequence; but what moment passes unattended with calamities?

WATTS.

CONCERNING Watts's poetry, my opinion agrees with our author's—There is in it, I think, a happy, and sometimes almost incomparable freedom of verification, of spirit, and of piety; and it may be said in his own words, that in his Odes

“ A thousand loose Pindaric plumes fly
“ scatt'ring down the wind.”

Yet they are often too puritanical and tautologous; and I believe all his readers are wearied with his chariot, how well forever hung.

“ Such he was as every Christian Church
“ would rejoice” (*would have rejoiced*, it should have been) “ to have adopted,” is so candid a sentence of the candid account of Watts, that I am inclined to forgive our biographer for some of his harshnesses, moved thereto by the friendly name of Sir
Thomas

Thomas Abney, remembranced by Dr. Gibbons. Indeed Johnson could not long survive such a mental resolution. As to extemporary preaching, it is generally tautologous: yet I know not that some may not compose extemporaneously better than in their closets, as a running water sparkles more than a standing lake. As to the next paragraph, "He did not endeavour to assist his eloquence by any gesticulations; for, as no corporeal actions have any correspondence with theological truth, he did not see how they could enforce it."

If gesticulation, or any mode else, could convey a zeal for things sacred or spiritual, and Christian humility to the heart of man, it would, in a person of five-foot stature, hardly have that effect: but I cannot suppose our author serious in suggesting, that moderate gesture, accompanying an oral vigour, can ever enforce it. Emphasis and action may have naturally a general effect in imparting help to thought, the body to assist the soul, as the soul reciprocally affects the body, by imparting a peculiar unaccountable

accountable cast of appearance to persons of respective stations of life, affecting their manners partly perhaps by the different trains of thought current in their minds; or they may do it even by exciting attention. In the following pages, he commends Watts's "combating Locke at one time, " and at another, making a catechism for "children," though he had unluckily reprehended Milton for doing the like. But Watts, though a sacred poet, was somehow his favourite; but Milton was not. He affirms indeed, in regard to sacred poetry, that "it is sufficient for Watts to have done " better than others, what no man has " done well." He had alleged just before, that the "paucity of topics of *devotional* " *poetry* enforces perpetual repetition," which is indeed not void of truth; and that the "sanctity of the matter rejects the " ornaments of the figurative diction;" but he must have confessed that the Psalmist and prophets seem to have afforded examples to the contrary.

OF COLLINS'S

ODE on the Passions, which has perhaps obtained as much celebrity as it deserves, nothing is said. Our author observes, that this poet clogs his verses with consonants. And I observe that *Dyer* makes free with grammar, particularly in rendering neutral or intransitive verbs, transitive.

As to Collins's application to bookfellers, and promising a version of Aristotle's *poetics*: it is to be lamented that men of genius should be reduced to the necessity of mortgaging their brains, and that sums so small can be taken upon them. Indeed our author lifts the veil too much from the mystery of book-making; discrediting it, and rendering it in a manner contemptible.

AS TO SHENSTONE,

JOHNSON's and his mind were so diametrically opposite, that they were like the elephant and rhinoceros; and in the story of the wooden book, Johnson chose rather to burlesque learning than to omit so idle a jest: nevertheless, of the two, it must be admitted, that Shenstone was at least as far removed from being a piece of timber as himself, who a little resembled King Log. For as to the stanzas of Shenstone, "to which" (says Johnson) "if any mind denies its sympathy, it has no acquaintance with love or nature;"—the reader should be informed, that it is said that he had no perception of their beauty till it was pointed out to him; but whether the sketches exhibited by him for laying out pleasure-grounds were his, I know not. Shenstone brings to mind Tickell's lines addressed to Addison:

"Ne'er was to the bow'rs of bliss convey'd

"A purer spirit, or more welcome shade."—

which

which however were, I suppose, too mythological for our author. Be that as it might, the concluding criticism is really cruel: but it is beyond the power of Johnson's libel on this tender poet, Hammond, Gray, &c. of his ironical commendation of Addison, as himself has given out, or of any pedagogue's contempt, to destroy their reputation; although he introduces Gray with his knotted club to knock down the gentle Shenstone, to be himself knocked down at last by our blind Polypheme in the wantonness of his might. He makes Lyttelton too give him a stroke, in the spirit of him who furnished the monkies with clubs to belabour one another for his diversion.

The Doctor, as always, sickens at the idea of any thing rural. Were it not vain to argue against a person who possessed but three out of the five senses, being destitute of that of taste and sight, one might have asked him who wrote *London*, whether great cities do not afford something sickening,
distressing,

distressing, or horrible, at every step by day or by night. Too true it is, that the savageness of mankind renders rural, as well as other scenes, often sickening and odious; but the scenes of pastoral may be supposed to be laid in Arcadia, or rather indeed in fancied Arcadia. But if we will not in this admit fiction allowed to every kind of poetry, but insist on truth, ancient, or perhaps some modern, realities may afford some satisfaction. It may not be impossible, that as the belief of the true God has always been preserved in some corner of the world, so the genuine simplicity of nature may have never been quite extinct. But otherwise, the pastoral poet may revert to the state of man before the fall. At all times grazing flocks are certainly a pleasing sight: though, in modern times, those who deem themselves of the better sort, annex, like the lowest of mankind whom they nevertheless despise, no idea of entertainment to the prospect of them, but sordidness: they, I will not say, like our biographer, have not the least relish of nature as it is solely
 God's.

God's. If, according to a remark of Pope's, in his essay on pastoral, only the pleasing objects of rural life should be presented to view, that of a shepherd in Britain at this day has agreeable circumstances. Let one figure to himself a fine spring morning; the sun rising over a distant hill, bespangling the wide surrounding lawn with pearl, the harmless smiling flocks cropping it, and the lark singing over his head, whilst perhaps the thoughts of his fair one attunes his own voice to the carrol and the song. If moreover he has a genius for verse, or music to entertain his long leisure, the comparison with sequestered scenes of Arcadia will not seem preposterous. But withal, the reader of pastoral, as of romance, may please himself with the natural congenial idea of a future immortal state, realizing, and more than realizing, the sweet tranquil descriptions of Arcadian and Elysian vales, or of golden castles and ivory gates turning to angelic harmony, such as it never entered the imagination of poet to conceive. Regarding the pastoral of romance, as better
than

than past, as prophetic of what is to come ; of, for ought we know, Paradise Regained, when the thoughts of the butcher shall not mingle with the sight of the flocks and herds.

YOUNG.

YOUNG.

THIS learned (lawyers are always learned) imitator of Johnson, has been particularly successful in grammatical inversion and personification. Yet his figure of *dipping the pen in poetry*, seems broken; he should have said, *into the inkstand of poetry*; and his simile of *sailing from the shore*, seems spoiled in dressing. Instead of "it only appears that the shore also recedes," it would have been better, *it is the same thing as if the shore receded.*

From the letter of the Archbishop to Dr. Young, it appears, that times were altered in the days of Thomas Secker, from what they were in those of Thomas à Becket. Dr. Young, who, with a genius comprehensive and sublime, joined real piety with parade; some fire with more smoke; some sense with much wit; some meaning with more fustian; and some smoothness with an abundance of rigidity; most excelled,

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(178)

if that may be termed excelling, in amplifying his thoughts, and twisting them into a thousand shapes.

MALLET.

MALLET

S E E M S to have been a ministerial
tool.

N 2

AS

AS TO AKENSIDE,

I SHALL put him off with a remark on the "*idle question*," as it is termed by Johnson, who, himself, I think, quibbles in opposing truth and ridicule one to the other, by mistaking the question; whereas truth may lie in either ridicule or seriousness, is general. Truth is the thing fought, but the question is how to find it. Moreover, that which is grounded thereon need not fear ridicule; but that which is not, is liable to the probe of satire, though not indeed of capricious merriment. And with translating for the benefit of the unlearned reader—the Latin scrap applied to him:

Pars minima ist ipsa Puella fui.

To Akenfide's smooth verfe, not fenfe, we ftoop;
As Miſs is not conspicuous, but her hoop.

GRAY.

GRAY AND LYTTTELTON.

THIS biography may be compared to the Catullian *Epigram*, which has its venom diffused throughout; yet it is so pointed in its tail, by the severity exercised to Lyttelton and Gray, that it has also considerable resemblance to the *Epigram* of Martial.

Lord Lyttelton, who, though once chancellor of the exchequer, could not, according to an assertion in the letters ascribed to his son, count twenty, was in common with the great Duke of Marlborough, the Earl of Godolphin, his friend Mr. Pitt, Lord Holland, and other apostates, originally a Tory, and caressed by Swift and that party. By the way, nothing is so irksome as the precipitate wrongheadedness and blindness of faction. Who would believe that Lord Mansfield, clamoured against for being a Tory and Jacobite, to have been placed at the head of the Kings Bench by

George II. in the ministry of the Duke of Newcastle? And here justice ought to be done to our author's political ideas, how much soever exploded, that violent Whigs are not always ready to grant that liberty which they claim. On the contrary, their views are to raise themselves at the expence of monarchy; not to promote inferiors to a participation of the same franchises with themselves, but to pull down their superiors to their own level: whilst none are fonder of ruling, none are more impatient of obedience.

To speculate a little: It must be granted that Gray, for instance, possessed a larger field of knowledge and of genius than Lyttleton; and that even lesser Shenstone possessed a fine one; yet how different their circumstances?—the one a Lazarus, begging for the crumbs that fell from the other's table. It is true, that his Lordship, like his friend Lord Chatham, possessed a share of Attic wit, and belonged to the universe of letters, as well as to the world of politics. But Mr. Pitt's knowledge was much confined

finer to politics, the very reason of his reaching to such eminence in his own country; whilst an extended, diffused walk of science avails little at home, though eventually much more important.

Men who would figure in their own time and country, in preference to lasting and general fame, must, for the most part, apply themselves to that which peculiarly belongs to it; to present, local, and municipal concerns, resembling topical medicines and the concentration of a focus, to which abilities, rather than genius, are conducive. Again, of abilities there are two kinds, the one resident in the head, and the other in the forehead: a happy union of which is excellently calculated for parchments and the bar, both hateful to elegant genius, and is that which has raised many to the summit of the law, to be remembered no where but in reports, a twelvemonth after their death. Yet persons of higher genius should apply themselves principally to one species of study. It may not be invidious to observe of Mr. Pitt, minor, that

his genius is quite different from his father's, and wanted not the chicanery of a rudimental education in the law to render him a Jesuit.

But our author's remarks on Gray are not without some foundation; particularly that his language is encumbered and harsh; and that his poetry was in a manner the effect of industry and perseverance. The *Bard* in particular is too artificial as opposed to natural; involved in complications of figures, forced with tautologies, distorted by inversions, and disjointed by parentheses and full points; and, to carry on the metaphor, raised or roughened with fret work into false, or at least not true, sublime. The *Progress of Poesy*, a pretty antique word despised by Johnson, and even his flightier pieces have likewise a stiffness to which Pindar had certainly no recourse, and from which Dryden's ode is entirely exempt. Gray owes much to scowering, as does Virgil to wire-drawn epithets; whilst Milton cramps with hard words and eccentricates by transposition, (remarkable therefore it is,

is, that *Paradise Lost* and Young's *Night Thoughts* are read by all sorts of people; the former doubtless for its extravagance, and the latter for its soothing melancholy,) and Shakespeare often borders on fustian, but his thoughts usually keep pace with his language. Milton's natural passages are the best, and most resemble Homer; and are those which approach nearest to the sacred writings, whence his hints are chiefly drawn.

I will add some distinct remarks on some of Gray's pieces, after observing that he has made very free with the writings of others; and just mentioning that Johnson has made *it* the pronoun to *professor*.

Prospect of Eton College:—

“ The captive linnæa which enthrall?”

is tautologous: and surely “ Gay hope—
“ possess” favours of nonsense, though the object of hope may indeed be possessed. In the *Progress of Poetry*:—Should not “ Glory
“ pursue” be rather *Glory pursues?* Of the
Bard,

Bard, the fourteenth line would be far better, *Cried Mortimer to arms*,—than “To arms cried Mortimer”—which is very lame.

“ Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre,”

is a harsh, laboured complication of figures, and there is a further jumble of *striking with a master's fire*. *Struck his deeply sorrowing lyre* would be solemn, yet simple. It may be observed, that what owes its beauty to contrivance, often appears to be without it, the texture of the workmanship being less visible in a polished than an unpolished work. “ He rests among the dead ” does not accord with the tenor of the text.

“ Heard ye the din of battle bray ? ”

is rather an odd question. A battle may be figuratively said to bray; but *din of battles braying*, the *braying* of the *braying*, is a curious *assism*. And *be*, in the last line, is superfluous, inserted to fill the measure. Of the *Fatal Sisters*, the third and fourth stanzas would be better if transposed. In
the

the *Fragment*, *biding* and *riding* spoil the uniformity of the metre.

In the first stanza of the *Elegy*, he talks of darkness, and in the third it is moonlight; indeed the night might have risen in the mean time. In the seventh, *yielding to the sickle*, is but a poor expression; and the furrow itself is the broken earth. The twelfth is very excellent. In the twenty-first "*spelt*" "by the unletter'd Muse" favours of a bull; and "peep of dawn" in the twenty-second, of burlesque, into which "bubbles" in the following one might be also construed.

As to "the character of the *Elegy*," Johnson rejoices "to concur with the common reader; for," adds he, "by the common sense of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtlety and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours." To which may be added, that all worldly altercations will then cease, and that the mould of the church-yard will satisfy us with earth, a
contemplation

contemplation odious to its fordid sons, who abhor nothing so much as the thoughts of any thing above it. Our author, in avoiding Scylla, founders on Charybdis; is, in censuring the most part of the poetry of Gray, compelled to pass a panegyric on some of it, and on some of Shenstone's. However, I apprehend, a degree at least of refinement necessary to constitute judgment in poetry; for as to the common people, they have no idea of any composition but of fun or narrative, and, like boys, prefer the immaturity of trash to sound productions; and yet, as I have observed, they are fond of Milton's poems, because narrative, and containing wild indigested stories.

CONCLUSION.

CONCLUSION.

THESE Lives, which furnish the literary of a century, and contain many good morsels of criticism, &c. may be named with Plutarch's, on account of the veins of pleasantry interspersed ; but if we compare the numerous apothegms recorded by Plutarch, with the few recited by Johnson, we shall find our author's greatly superior, and be apt to conclude that both Plutarch's heroes and himself entertained but an indifferent notion of repartee. These two great biographers also resemble each other in possessing a considerable spice of the old woman.

The characteristics of Dr. Johnson were general and extensive classical erudition, strong sense, and accurate observation ; which seasoned with dry humour and sly detraction, rather than Dryden's free, and Pope's pungent wit, have rendered his classical erudition equally immortal. Strange,
and

and a pity it was, that with his great qualities, he, or rather his posthumous editors, should make the world the confessor of his weaknesses, and of his methodism, commixed as they were with literary butchery and savageness. Indeed his character consisted of contradictions. Though his piety was great, and he feared not man, but God, nor any dangers of death, yet he trembled at the thoughts of it. His piety was of the kind, that, haughty and arrogant as it was, would have held the world in the fetters of slavery and priestcraft, whilst the precepts inculcated in these *lives* run counter both to divinity and christian morality. He thought that every one but himself should submit to the great, whilst he despised all men but Popes and Kings, and his father among the rest. As his own character was inconsistent, so his countrymen, nine in ten of whom despised his principles, and nine in ten of the remainder his uncouth manner approaching to savageness, though he was enamoured of a smooth luxurious age, adored him. So devoted was he to the ways of the world, that

that in this latter work, he, as Bacon says of Machiavel, taught rather what men do, than what they ought to do, as Bacon himself taught by example.

Of his works ; though they have little of originality, and his style has a certain atrabiliousness, and his tissue of paragraphs an unpleasing quaintness, it must be confessed that his Dictionary, *Rambler*, and the two imitative translations of Juvenal, &c. are very excellent ; and that these *Lives of the English Poets* contain a fund of very valuable general criticism, and that his remarks on Pope's Epitaphs are singularly acute, and, for the most part, just. But the coarseness of his constitution, his vigorous mind being perhaps vitiated or degraded by the grossness of his body, vibrated not to the delicate touches of a Shenstone and a Hammond, nor even to the stronger hand of a Gray, but gravitated by the weight of that in which it was inclosed to earth. Johnson's feelings were more ordinary than fine, which indeed accounts for his popularity ; more nervous than elevated ; and I take

Hawkef-

Hawkesworth to have been at least his equal in sublimity, and that the author of the *Adventurer* deserves one history of his life.

Johnson was in literature what the first Pitt was in politics, both being alike rough and overbearing. And it would, methinks, be no disagreeable speculation for a moment, how such violent spirits would have assorted on the national theatre? But, as according to Johnson, Garrick was mute in a court of law, and the Lord Chief Justice would probably make but an indifferent figure on the stage, so it is probable that he, whose knowledge much exceeded Pitt's, would have borne the bell in conversation, as he easily did in the company of Chesterfield, but would not have been a match for either in Parliament; though it is not likely that he would have brooked total silence, as did, according to report, the whole House of Commons, at one period of Chatham's greatness. How was it at the club, of which Charles Fox and Burke were members? When the Doctor ridiculed Lord Mansfield for being the pack-horse of the law,

law, he might have remembered that himself had been a lexicographical pioneer.

Johnson seldom writes to the fancy ; nor visibly ironically so as to discover such a purpose to the reader ; but in a continual jog-trot of didactic, allowing no holiday. He constantly addresses himself to the understanding ; makes no excursions into the regions of spirits, beyond “ this visible diurnal sphere,” nor essays knowledge denied to “ ears of flesh and blood ;” nor even wishes to stray beyond the walks of mere modern life, back to the regions of Gothic fancy. His timid, impalpable, dreary religion permitted him not to expatiate in the field of hypothesis and conjecture ; reveries, vain, perhaps, yet amusing ; the food of the soul, and a refuge from the miseries and calamities of life. Terribly afraid of free-thinking, though not hostile to free-eating, he immersed in dogma and superstition, fearing to make use of reason as a mediator between extremes. He had the anxiety and yearning of the Psalmist without the joy and exultation : such as repel from a plea-

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fant

fant contemplation of the Deity, and instead of imparting delight, make men shrink back from eternity, and exhibit the idea of death terrible; such as pluck away the rose buds of ideal hope from the hour of the separation of soul and body, and point it only with thorns. But these maladies, and his other defects and faults, candour will partially set down to his frame of body, ill adapted to a perfect mind, and acknowledge him, with whose anecdotes the press teemed, to have been no inconsiderable person, but a great author, notwithstanding his Dictionary is imperfect, his Rambler pompous, his Idler inane, his lives unjust, his poetry inconsiderable, his learning common, his ideas vulgar, his Irene a child of mediocrity, his genius and wit moderate, his precepts wordly, his politics narrow, and his religion bigoted.

A DREAM.

A DREAM.

AFTER having been occupied in perusing Dr. Warton's *Essay on the genius and writings of Pope*, and Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets*, the comparison I had made of those two eminent writers, presented to my mind the following vision:—According to my best recollection of the flitting scene, those Doctors, who frequented the same walk of classic literature, were in conversation with each other. The reader needs not to be informed, that in dreams, neither the preservation of the unities, nor the avoidance of anachronisms, are to be expected; and that inconsistencies and contradictions become natural when the soul and body are in a manner disunited and at variance.

Dr. Warton. Dr. Johnson, I give you joy of having finished your *Lives*.

O 2

Johnson.

Johnson. (*starting*) Sir, you don't imagine I am going to die?

Warton. No; I rather think you have rendered yourself immortal. *The Doctor is still afraid of dying.*

Johnson. Our opinions in many respects agree.

Warton. Aye, we agree in one great point, in our sentiments of mankind, and in reprobating the opinion of those who represent them as proud, selfish, or knavish; as in all my concerns I have met with none such.

Johnson. Envy, malignity, hatred of honesty and virtue, mixture of pride and wantonness, contempt of the humble, and superciliousness to the unfortunate, with the rest of the catalogue numerated by the satirists, have never fallen in my way, nor do I acquiesce in the cant, that church-men are lazy, or courtiers insincere.

Warton. No, Sir; I dare say that, during
your

your residence in London, you have rarely seen wealth haughty, or misery insulted, any more than those resident in the country have been witnesses to oppression; and it may be affirmed, that cruelty or callousness belong not to mankind;—that, with a few exceptions, all men do as they would be done by; that there hardly exists an hypocritical patriot, faint, or divine; that a lawyer who prolongs a cause to the ruin of his client, or guardian who embezzles a ward's property, are monsters which the world never saw, or knows not of even in modern times; so that I am in great hopes that the Millenium is approaching, or rather returning. *O how glorious were the ancients, their writings and manners! O the Grecian ages!*

Johnson. We also agree in making charitable allowances for the frailty of human nature, and you will teach that the greatest crimes are to be regarded with a favourable eye, so that “the universe may be blessed.” *O what charming manners and times are the present!*

Warton. We agree that rough satire is improper and unpolite, and that the only method of curing vices is to tickle them; not to exasperate the offenders, for I would as soon men ion hell to the House of Lords, as write a severe satire; and, in fact, whatever mankind are made of, it is highly wrong to propagate unwelcome truths; and, next to Winchester, I regard dissimulation as the best school.

Johnson. Sir, you are right; and you plainly see, that since my circumstances have been altered, I have retracted my *Juvenal* and *Rambler*, and even half abjured the Pretender.

Warton. Aye, 'twas poor sleeping on a bulk with Savage.

Johnson. Sir, you would not have gotten a good living by stickling hard for religion. But we wander from our subject, which was criticism. Sir, you and I resemble each other in our perambulations of the walks of literature.

Warton.

Warton. And yet, like other doctors, we differ. You want taste, Sir.

Johnson. Sir, you want sense.

Warton. Pardon me, Sir, I did not mean to offend you : indeed you have too much sense ;—I mean too little fancy, and no sublimity of imagination.

Johnson. Sir, I have more taste and imagination than you. If you had any at all, you would have discerned the excellence of Pope's simile of the Alps in his Essay on Criticism.

Warton. Pardon me, you have no taste for the ancients.

Johnson. Sir, I like a modern dinner better than one dressed for Heliogabalus.

Warton. I am not speaking of their cookery, but of their writings, which ought to be a model to all posterity. They unite simplicity with invention, and have strength

without point; and do not, I mean the true classics, affect smartness.

Johnson. Sir, you have no wit, and therefore decry it; nor any highflown genius, as you would fancy. And where are the ethereal imaginations in the greatest of the ancients, such as we find in Shakespeare, and Milton's Miscellanies? And in science, the ancients were mere idiots. What do you think of the notion of the stars being stones, snatched up into the skies, exhibited in that chaos of nonsense named *Plutarch's Morals*?

Warton. You, Doctor, are an affected humourist, and aim at dryness, slyness, and archness: your ideas and morality are debauched with vulgarity, which I was ashamed of even in the *Adventurer*, wherein, you know Hawkefworth's province was chiefly novel and romance; mine, criticism; and yours, moral observations, in which, but not so much as in your *Lives*, you rivet in the minds of people worldly regards; which it is always as difficult to wrench from them

as

as their souls from their bodies: and your style is not a classic, Attic vein, but patched with wittiness; for the true import of *Attic wit* is not wittiness, much less witticism, but rather simply *Attic thought*, according to Webb in his *Literary Amusements*;—

“ Come, Hooker, with thee let me dwell on a phrase

“ Uncorrupted by wit, unambitious of praise:

“ Thy language is chaste, without aims or pretence;

“ ’Tis a sweetness of breath from a soundness of sense.”

Johnson. Sir, I yield to no man in these qualities. But your English patterns of simplicity, Hooker, Raleigh, and Bacon, have shrewd sentences; nor are the Scripture-writers, the best ancients of all, without them. Homer wrote an heroi-comical poem; and his and Virgil’s staple works are not strangers to point. Some salt, some zest is requisite. I seasoned my productions, and they sold. And, Sir, let me tell you, your adoration of Paganism is no honour to Christianity. Sir, I am more ashamed of you.

Warton. Homer, though his speakers might
naturally

naturally brandish sometimes the spear of wit, he was far above modern wittiness. As to your fling about Paganism, if you embrace Mahometanism, why should not I Paganism, Doctor?

Johnson. Nor did Homer, like you in your Essay on Pope, go out of his way to tell all he knew, a brag of every one that had spoken to him.

Warton. Nor keep a toad-eater to retail his scraps. Pardon me, you are a plagiarist.

Johnson. I a plagiarist? Gentle shepherd, tell me where?

Warton. From my Essay on Pope: particularly you copied my critique on the *Dunciad*.

Johnson. Because you was a dunce. But you only anticipated me in my *Lives* what we had talked over; so that you are in effect the plagiarist.

Warton.

Warton. Punning is not arguing. But it is no wonder that a jingler loves puns. I a dunce! I'll sue you for destroying my school, and make your ghostship enter an appearance, as Judge Buller did Lord George Gordon.

Johnson. Aye, his Lordship was too hard for Buller.—Ha, ha, ha! The law is hardly rhyme or reason. As to rhymes, Sir, the want of quantities in English makes rhyme necessary; and the redundant syllables admitted at the ends of blank lines, destroy their uniformity.

Warton. Rhymes and point are fit only for children; and are as much inferiour to blank verse, as a round peal to the various modulations of changes, or a wilderness of sweets to a parterre; yet blank verse is not without uniformity.

Johnson. What were Cicero's puns fit for? Sir, parterres are more striking than serpentine walks; and with all your taste of antiques, rhyme resembles the Grecian architecture,

chitecture; yet both have modulation, and blank verse the Gothic; and in didactic poetry, rhyme confers a mathematical conciseness and clearness. What more striking than the lines of a regiment in equal rank and file?

Warton. That is not denied; but you have no genius nor taste for the variegated face of nature, and her wild wood-notes, though yourself a savage.

Johnson. A pedagogue talk of genius! Sir, Nature is regular.

Warton. And so has blank verse regularity. You are both a pedagogue and a dictionary-maker; no better than a literary pioneer; and withal, according to Horne Tooke, without one qualification for philosophy. Indeed, I believe that Lowth's examples in his little grammar, have contributed to correct writing more than your huge work; but his Lordship fares with him no better than you.

Johnson.

Johnson. Sir, you talk of Lowth and grammar, who know not that *nor*, not *or*, is the correspondent of *neither**. As to the dog Tooke, with all his conceit, houses and ships have many partitions, though huts and canoes have none; and what has he said that we did not know before; this would be procrustes?

Warton. Pardon, pardon, Doctor; you know that three quarters of modern language are factitious, or fictitious, though we were all apprised of many words being so; but enough of him. The slip you attribute to me might be an error of the press, and you confound *as* and *so*. But what could possess you so capriciously to abuse together with Gray, Hammond, Ambrose, Phillips, &c. Prior, who was of your own kidney? But, alas! indeed, the tender pathetic affections of the heart, humane as yours was in many respects, had no charms for you, no more than had "strains of

* In Warton's Essay on Pope, we find "They *neither* seek *or* expect." And in the same page, 212, "*Neither* Spencer *or* Milton."

" higher

" higher mood." Nature's grand features, and imagery of her own picturesque pencil, the tempest-beaten shore, the cormorant buffeting with the whistling howling wind, or the screaming eagle, have no charms for you ; you was incapable of sublime reverie, and nearly of love.

Johnson. Sir, I was in love with Tetty. But what possessed yourself to decry Hill and Addison, and to consider those as really vermin who were branded in the *Dunciad*, which was by a flirt of wit to annihilate writers, such as Quarles and Bentley, who may nevertheless live as long as its author himself? According, Sir, to your boasted taste, the *Campaigne*, which is devoid of point, is descriptive and particular, should, instead of being denominated a gazette in rhyme, have received your strong approbation: and Aaron Hill was as humane and friendly a man as any living. As to your representation of Addison, as of a poetical fancy, but unhappy in vesting it in verse, it is vain and false ; his lines, particularly the versification of his *Rosalind*, which is
 enchanting

enchanting and various, being generally harmonious. But his wit, though pleasing and brilliant, wanted the force of that of Pope, and of Juvenal, whom, with Martial, you strangely pretend to despise. On the contrary, Sir, a smooth silver knife will never penetrate to the core of vice; but it must be the rough edge of more powerful metal, wielded with a strong hand. The tickle of Horace and Addison will but make both the reader and offender laugh, and, therefore, they seldom more than rallied follies; and indeed a turn-coat and debauchee, like Horace, could do more with an ill grace. Sir, I have not always written my mind.

Warton. We have no turn-coats in these days, Doctor; nor many masters of seraglios.

Johnson. Sir, I am no turn-coat. I am a Tory, and would not have accepted of a pension from Whigs; yet if I had kept a seraglio, my ladies should not have been confined; they should have been Whigs.

Warton.

Warton. Ha, ha, ha!—You defend yourself against the charge well, I must confess, against the change of your coat. But, harkee, Doctor; a great coat is the best of all, ha, ha, ha!

Johnson. I am glad you have given me a sample of Horatian at last; but not equal to your brother's, when he said a dubb'd brewer was a Knight of Malta.

Warton. But, Doctor, how came you to advise the Scotch Lords to become rebels?

Johnson. Argyle did so before me, or made them so by intercepting their address to George I. and after he had raised them, laid them; but the King afterwards found him out, and deprived him of his commissions.

Warton. You ought to be hanged for what you said in the Hebrides; and for saying that George I. cared nothing about his crown, meaning, that he regarded only his Hanoverian farm, pestered by Hanoverian rats, according to the Jacobite cant.

Johnson.

Johnson. And you ought to be whipped, old Esau, for letting Tom seize the butt of sack;—

The Doctor, sweet Doctor, is left in the lurch,
By the dealer in laurel, the dealer in birch.

Ha, ha, ha! Were it not for *ifs* and *buts*,
you would have been a poet, ha, ha, ha!

Warton. But you would not.

Johnson. Sir, I am a better poet than you; though, because you have been in Italy, you think yourself possessed of Italian fancy. And it is to be regretted that Tommy, who so well distinguished Agincourt from Cressi, is not a professor of history; and then you might become laureat, and tickle Georgy's ears instead of boy's bums, ha, ha, ha!

Warton. (*after a pause.*) When I am laureat, I'll treat you with a glass of sack, Doctor, to warm you on your bulk, unless you should prefer gin, and the times were not changed; but we have agreed that the

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world

world is always beneficent, and generous to those in need.

Johnson. So far from your deposing him, he'll hardly bear a brother near his throne; and you resemble the relatives of Eastern Princes, yet are a greater despot over children than the Sophi of Persia.

Warton. Sir, you forsooth affect to be the Great Turk, though but a poetaster. But don't you know, that birch bears mitres; and that then the head becomes our province, as we can turn our hands to any thing! A cap is better than bays.

Johnson. Sir, a couplet of my Juvenal weighs more than any of your copies of verses.

Warton. The Latins are to the Greeks, what the French are to the Italians, and as you are to Juvenal; all but imitators.

Johnson. Sir, Juvenal was original, unless

less Archilochus was his pattern, and my club* was as heavy as Juvenal's; but yours and your brother's pieces are but toys.

Warton. Seriously indeed, Doctor, neither of us are poets, and if there are any in Europe of the higher order, we must go, I believe, to the High Dutch, which language is not melted into refined inanity, and to which poetry is, in a manner, new. The Welch were sublime bards.

Johnson. There is something in that. Do you think I have understood Greek?

Warton. I think that a Greek etymologist, as you have been, could hardly be ignorant of it. But Garrick, you know, could not play the gentleman; and Lord Mansfield is no great lawyer; and opinion, you know, is everlasting, when once it has obtained. Men would die with envy, could

* I a little expected that Johnson would serve Warton as he did Osborn, but he only shook his oaken staff at him.

not they find something with which to tease eminence.

But, Doctor, I ask your pardon ; I, if not yourself, had really forgotten that you are dead. Pray, can you inform me of any circumstances below ? or, are ye all free-masons ?

Johnson. That, Sir, is a very apt comparison. I remember, that when I was dying, I grasped my *Rambler* in my right hand, which appeared like a sheet anchor, (for death, in its heterogeneousness and inconsistency, had the resemblance to a dream) ; but my *Lives* I pushed from me with my left, (let not Tommy pun and say, I could not retain my *life* any longer) ; and as to my dictionary, I thought to have used it for a pillow, but Mr. Tooke advised me to make a stocklog of it and warm myself with it, for indeed I was cold. The last circumstance of this world that I remember, was a strange mixture of words and things swimming before my
fight ;

fight*; and the first of the other was a wonder, whither I had been conveyed during my sleep.

Warton. How long ago did it seem that you had died?

Johnson. A very little while it seemed; but how long it really was, I know not. After awaking, as from a sleep, it came across me that I had been taken prisoner, and conveyed to Morocco; and conceived that a person who attended me was a Moor, and in order to soften his rigour, told him that I was an Englishman, and a friend to his Moorish Majesty. Sir, says I, I am Doctor Samuel Johnson, the greatest man in the world, except your master and Lord Mansfield. Sir, says he, grinning a ghastly smile, we shall be very glad to see his Lordship, who has sent some mortals here; but the King of Prussia sent as many thousands: but, added he, we are not Moors. I then

* According to the course of this account, as it appeared to me, I have placed only a semicolon between the two words, at the threshold.

perceived that I was dead, and arrived in the shades below.

Warton. Did you then recollect about the world you had left?

Johnson. Yes, Sir, the occurrences of my life rushed on me in a most lively and forcible view. The good actions I had done, or attempted, gave me ineffable delight, especially when I beheld a huge mill into which oppressors were thrown to be grinded. I recollected again the *Rambler* and my *Devotions* with rapture, and my *Lives* again sounded harsh dissonance in my ears, whilst my *Dictionary* and *Irene* were indifferent to me. But my *Politics*, in which I was sincere, gave me satisfaction; and my pension, the fruit, partly of them, and partly of my literary labours, gave me no regret, as I thought I deserved hundreds better than did some others thousands, as the poor shared it with me.

Warton. Literature must be there superseded.

fed by intuition. But who was this person you was mentioning?

Johnson. Sir, his name was *Curiosity*; a kind of Mercury to Pluto, who, accompanying *Report*, always attends new-comers of importance in person, whilst some of their messengers attend all. *Curiosity* did not stand still a moment, but put questions with rapidity equal to that with which a maid of honour inquires about a ball or a wedding, whilst *Report* was alike impatient to run away with the news.

Warton. I should have expected that *Fame* would have attended you, Doctor.

Johnson. Sir, he always sends *Report* before. I inquired of *Curiosity* concerning the state of those regions, the manners, customs, policy, diversions, &c. all which have a near resemblance with those of this world, inasmuch that I am convinced of the earth being a colony of those regions, and that it will never revolt from the mother-country, though there may be some few disaffected

persons. *Curiosity* informed me, that it was computed by Pluto, who is seldom mistaken in regard to mankind, that were it in their power, they would be as unwilling to overturn his empire, as would the French to destroy the English smuggling-towns: however, he must certainly over-rate his authority on earth, in his calculation that there is not above one strictly honest man in a hundred thousand, and not above one in a thousand who goes to public worship for the sake of religion; and that he is in great hopes that many squint towards him.

Warton. But did not you contradict this, who had so good an opinion of mankind?

Johnson. I did: but whether I had not sufficiently recovered myself to collect my arguments, or however it was, I had but little success. On my affirming that Pluto was egregiously vain and mistaken, *Curiosity* put these questions to me:—How many persons in England would commute, by resigning religion, on condition of being excused paying tythe? how many gentlemen had
religion

religion nearer their hearts than their estates, or their game? and at last he asked me if I knew of an honest man? When I answered hastily, that I knew many of all these, he coolly bade me reckon them up, on which I saw numbers of mighty good sort of people flitting before me and vanishing. However, they did not all disappear, and I perceived King George III. remaining. But vexed to see the honesty of such numbers come to nothing, I asked him what he thought of Mr. Hanway and of Mr. Howard; on which the infernal dominions seemed to shake around me, and *Curiosity* saying something about the Man of Rofs, Dr. Walwyn, a Prebendary of Canterbury, and the present Mr. John Knox, being for a moment put to a nonplus; I proceeded to enquire in what diversions the infernal inhabitants passed their time? O, says he, in cock-throwing, cock-fighting, bull-baiting, and sporting; chiefly severing the heads of animals from their bodies, with chisels discharged from flat-barrelled guns, their mode of shooting. You are hardly aware how greatly Pluto is gratified, that, next to wh—g,

wh—g, all the people of Europe's highest gratification is to persecute and destroy innocent animals; and that even bishops follow it, and the generality of the clergy do little else. Then I have heard him boast, that there are European cooks as expert in torturing animals as any in his dominions; and that the slave-trade does his heart good to think of it; and that the English East and West Indies hold immediately of his crown. Then again, the Courts of Inquisition, of Chancery, and the Spiritual Court, he says, are his own; and, jokingly says, that Charon himself is not more bluff than the present Ch——r, nor his watermen more dilatory than the masters.

Warton. Did he say nothing of the dilatoriness of theatrical managers and bookfellers, when authors wanted money?

Johnson. Yes, Sir; he said that Pluto boasted that bookfellers despised learned men, as all monied men do curates, and lords do bishops. But there I was even with him: I told him that were not scholars poor,

poor, they would not write at all ; and that if rich ones were to write at all, it would be in favour of tyranny and aristocracy ; that were not the generality of authors beggars, the chief advantage of literature, the dissemination of liberty and of the equality of mankind, would be lost : on which my companion confessed that Pluto sometimes shook his head at observing, that good seemed sometimes to spring from evil, and put on a grave face.

Warton. But it does not follow thence, that private vices are public benefits, as I have observed.

Johnson. No, Sir : had mankind, free agent, never fallen, there would have been no occasion for good to arise out of evil, nor for intermediate evil ; but all would have been always right in this world, as we should now hope it will be eventually, and that the prior lapse of the angels will be also recovered.

Warton. I perceived, Doctor, that your
journey

journey to the Lowlands without your body, has, as might be expected, improved your metaphysics.

Johnson. Sir, I was always a metaphysician.

Warton. And a politician. Let me know something about politics.

Johnson. Ha, ha, ha! You remember Sir Fletcher Norton's and Beckford's speeches to the King. Soon after the arrival of the latter below, he, fancying Pluto like a king of this world, got a remonstrance carried up to him, and replied to his Majesty's answer; and what do you think was the consequence?

Warton. I am all attention.

Johnson. Hey, hey! What, what's this? rejoined Pluto, and clapped a hot coal into his mouth; at which, *Caught a Tartar! Caught a Tartar!* echoed through all the infernal caverns; ha, ha, ha!

Warton.

Warton. Ha, ha, ha! The Highlands have not furnished Boswell with so pleasant an anecdote; ha, ha, ha! Apropos, let me know something of the state of politics below. If that is Pluto's manner of serving patriots, I apprehend there are but few.

Johnson. And they would be equally scarce in England, had we an Henry VIII. in which case they would not be quite so loquacious, but would more resemble those over the water; but as much as I dislike them, I wish for no Henry VIIIth's, nor Duke of Brunswick's neither.

Warton. Indeed the Dutch are very ill used; for it is certain that the Stadtholder brought his ill usage partly on himself by his usurping influence, by which the government had been silently undermined, and is now blown up. His lady is very artful; and they indeed so headstrong and hasty as not to see the trap laid for them in her pretended journey, much like the Czarina's towards Turkey, whilst the disturbances in
the

devilish bad ; devilish clever, devilish awkward ; devilish cunning, devilish foolish, &c. &c. &c.—
Has he any parliaments?

Johnson. Only nominal ; for if the members pretend to open their mouths, he immediately claps a coal in it, which he calls *carbonading*, instead of a fop in sack, as practised by the King of England, and some other princes.

Warton. Who is his prime-minister?

Johnson. *Pride*, Sir, the son of the *World*, and elder brother of *Ambition* ; whose influence pervades all the departments of state. *Pleasure* has at times presided at the helm : but, besides that Pluto considers him as wavering, and has even suspected his loyalty, his temper is volatile and careless ; and though his understanding and judgment are much superior, (*Pride* being indeed the emptiest fool existing, and feeding, like aameleon, on air,) and his consequence extensive, it proved much less so than *Pride's* : and though they are in some degree

degree reciprocally influenced by each other, *Pride's* pre-eminence is much greater, particularly on earth, whose human inhabitants are the most preposterous and foolish beings in the universe, as I have now discovered, insomuch that a considerable part of the pastime of the infernal inhabitants is to laugh at them, though they sometimes are ashamed to make them an object of their seduction and derision, they are so silly and contemptible. But the motive most prevalent with Pluto for maintaining *Pride* in the station of premier, is his great influence with the clergy. However, to give the devil his due, understanding that his senate were divided into two great parties, that of *Pleasure* and *Pride*, before he determined to place the latter at the helm, to the prejudice of the former, he ordered their respective best speakers to urge their claims in his presence, with the declaration, that the ensign of prime minister, on which *Detur Tetrioni** is inscribed, should be given to merit. The argumentation on this oc-

* *Be the prize to the most horrible.*

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caſion laſted a week ; but I am ſorry that I am able to gratify you with only a ſmall part of the ſpeeches of *Cupid* on the ſide of *Pleasure*, and of *Faſhion* on the ſide of *Pride*. *Cupid*, aware of his merit and weight, in any rational well-meaning aſſembly, but knowing that he ſhould loſe the cauſe in that, and intending, when it ſhould be decided againſt his patron, to take wing and fly to his mother, the planet *Venus*, made a whimſical requeſt, ere he ſpoke, that he might ſalute Proſerpine, who was preſent with her huſband. But Pluto, who is not remarkable for good humour, declared, with a horrible ſmile, that, had he not given his word that free ſpeech ſhould not be interrupted, he would have carbonaded him ; for that however he was attached to him at the time he had ſeized Proſerpine, he had been ſince tired of them both, and that rational *Pleasure* was the greateſt enemy to his dominions. Without doubt, this ungallant ſarcaſm ſtung Proſerpine, whoſe fate was very ſevere, but who, acquainted with Cupid's intention of paſſing to the planet *Venus*, meditated an elopement with him ;

him: and it must be supposed that Pluto's choler somewhat terrified Cupid, bold as he is on occasion, yet his fright was not so great as to prevent his speech, which, whilst the plumes of his cap, which he held in his hand and gently waved, wafted fragrance around, but to which his audience preferred the scent of sulphur, was somewhat to this effect:—

“ *O ye Infernals,*

“ What wretched folly and stupidity
 “ possesses you, that ye should forsake the
 “ banners of *Pleasure*, under which ye have
 “ had such eminent success with mankind,
 “ to change them for that of the most empty
 “ and barren of all beings existing, *Pride*?
 “ Say, O say! who, since the creation of
 “ the earth, has occasioned so much misery,
 “ calamity, and devastation thereon,
 “ as *Pleasure*, and your humble servant?
 “ Not to go back to Adam and Eve themselves,
 “ think, think of the ruin brought
 “ on the chosen Sampson by Dalilah, and
 “ how David and Solomon were led astray
 “ by women! Recollect the havoc caused

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“ by

“ by Helen, whose name enforces a pun;
 “ by Thais, and by Cleopatra. Then confi-
 “ der, O ye Infernals! consider the power
 “ of luxury to relax virtue; to render men
 “ careless; to induce libertinism, and irre-
 “ ligious, and corruption, all, all the off-
 “ spring of *Pleasure*! Remember, O re-
 “ member the exploits of Bloods, Bucks,
 “ and Damn’d Honest Fellows! Think,
 “ think of the brawls, the execrations, the
 “ quarrels, the bloodshed, the ruin of con-
 “ stitutions, degeneracy of the human race,
 “ and virulent poison mixed with their
 “ blood and become hereditary! Attend,
 “ O ye Infernals! attend to these things,
 “ and banish *Pleasure*, the fountain of all
 “ the ills and evils of human kind, if ye
 “ can; to adopt the vacant giant *Pride*!
 “ O ye Infernals! do not the *Flesh* and the
 “ *Devil* always go together?”

When *Cupid* had ceased, *Fashion*, as he is re-
 presented in the frontispiece of the New Bath
 Guide, and with a spacious pair of buckles,
 and diminutive hat in his hand, which yet
 was an overmatch for his brains, rose with
 some

some difficulty through the weight of club of hair and filth, and dressed with gunpowder in compliment to Pluto, spoke to the following effect:—

“ *O ye Infernals,*

“ Shall *Pleasure*, trifling, short-lived *Pleasure*, the pastime of children, and relying
 “ on such a whimpering advocate as *Cupid*,
 “ contest the favour of his Sulphureous
 “ Majesty with the mighty *Pride*, whose
 “ stature reaches from hell to earth? Is
 “ there a prince; is there a lord; is there
 “ a bishop; a squire; a parson; a trades-
 “ man; a farmer; a mechanic; a labourer;
 “ a chimney-sweeper; a scullion; a person
 “ living on alms, not proud? Is there a
 “ Christian on earth who does not value
 “ himself on diametrically contradicting the
 “ first principles of his religion? Are not
 “ the dignified clergy, to a man, devotees
 “ to *Pride*? It is notorious to the universe
 “ that they are: and though it must be
 “ confessed that their temperance and ab-
 “ stemiousness are great, Pluto shall never
 “ be so ungrateful as to deny his obliga-

" tions to them. Yes, when Christians be-
 " come humble, and Whigs cease to tyrann-
 " nize, then say there is no truth in the
 " devil. *Cupid* vainly talks of the banners
 " of *Pleasure*. Ask the great men of the
 " world, even those the fondest of *Pleasure*,
 " whether they esteemed him of equal im-
 " portance with *Pride*, or rather as an
 " amusement for an idle hour, or a jackall
 " to *Pride*, and his brother *Ambition*. What
 " if Love has sometimes added flames to
 " *Ambition*; is not *Pride* the original
 " cause of all calamity and heartburnings
 " among human kind? The whiffler, *Cupid*,
 " has boasted of the broken constitutions
 " and poisons entailed by lust on mankind:
 " and what then? Is it not *Pride* that
 " takes delight to thwart and counteract
 " nature, the real cause? Had love, as na-
 " ture designed it, been equal, and not re-
 " strained by *Pride*, it would never have
 " been pent up in a sink of lust, but would,
 " like the Nile, have dispensed pleasure and
 " fertility over the earth. It is *Pride* that,
 " together with its companion Folly, and
 " your humble servant, is the root of every
 " ill

“ ill that awaits the earth. And it is past
 “ a doubt that your good sense, O ye In-
 “ fernals, will give your decided suffrages
 “ for him who finds employment for you
 “ all ; in which ye will confirm the judg-
 “ ment of those worthy Britons, a people
 “ not always acting so agreeably to our
 “ wishes, who framed the marriage-act,
 “ that bitter pill to that wretched urchin
 “ *Cupid*, who has forsooth told us, that the
 “ *Flesh* and the *Devil* always go together ;
 “ but forgot that the *World* is placed first.”

When *Pride* had ended, the hollow vaults
 resounded with his name, and he was im-
 mediately invested with the ensign of mini-
 ster ; whilst *Cupid* and *Proserpine* waited
 for an opportunity of eloping to *Venus*.

Warton. Doctor, these anecdotes are mar-
 vellously entertaining : but as *Ulysses* and
 others have brought accounts before from
 the infernal regions, some concerning the
 elopement you mentioned would be still
 more original. *Proserpine* had indeed of
 all young ladies the hardest fortune, to be

carried off by such a vile wretch to regions of brimstone whilst she was gathering a nosegay; a rape celebrated by Milton in an Ovidian puerility bordering on a pun, but with more propriety by Addison in his *Cato*.

Johnson. And, Sir, you know not that he compelled her to drink no liquor but Stygian porter, dashed, as I understand, with Lethe instead of opium, which he affirms to be more savory than that of the Thames, which he declares would poison him; and that, though he cannot deny his temporary residence in London, he could never persuade himself to taste it.

Warton. Dear Doctor, I am impatient for an account of the elopement, it has the air of such a curious novel, or rather romance: and indeed when a woman's wits are matched with the devil's, there is good scope for betting, though it is true that some of the more knowing ones surmise that Pluto was aware of the design, and, according to the
practice

practice of his crooked politics, indirectly promoted it.

Johnson. It happened that it was in agitation during the American war, a source of much joy to the lower regions: and it was concerted between Cupid and Proserpine; it being Pluto's custom, on the news of any disaster to the British arms, to have a revel, consisting of morrice-dancing, and all kinds of pranks; after which his majesty smoked his pipe and ate a roll of brimstone fopped in Lethe, by way of a double nightcap; that on the next event of that kind, the design should be put in execution. It was not long, though I know not whether it was General Burgoyne's or Lord Cornwallis's vanquishment, ere one of those events ensued, and Pluto was so delighted that he invited the morrice-dancers; played himself many pranks and feats of deception; scraped horribly a monstrous bass-viol; stared and danced a hornpipe in cap and bells; was extremely pleasant and gallant; swore Proserpine was as handsome as when he first brought her down; ordered
a roll

a roll of brimstone and Lethe for both himself and her, whilst she artfully put hers aside, substituting a fugar-roll and wine in their stead, and gave the former to Cerberus to lay him to rest, and, when her husband fell asleep, set off with Cupid, who had been present at the ball in disguise with a curricie and swans in waiting ;—

And from the dire abyfs they whirling drove
To *Venus*, and the lightsome realms of love,

after, according to a traditional computation, a residence below of about five thousand years ; for there are not wanting some to affirm, that Proserpine was no other than Eve, and that Pluto carried off Cupid, who was sporting by her side, along with her.

Warton. When Pluto found that she was gone, his rage must have been prodigious.

Johnson. It was indeed dreadful, either real or pretended. He cursed even the Americans ; for anger, like wine and love, speaks the truth, and wished they might live to feel the effects of their folly ; uttered

ed dreadful imprecations against *Pleasure*, his late minister, and swore that if he did not leave hell immediately, he would carbonade him to eternity; but he might have withheld his threat, *Pleasure*, and his advocate Cupid, now in the character of a page, having already taken a French leave and attended the runaway: cursed Cerberus for a lazy sleepy hound; swore that but one of his three mouths should ever be fed at a time; and that he should never taste a bit of brimstone more; removed him from his station of porter, and placed a monstrous hydra in his stead: execrated Proserpine for a long-legged fair-complexioned bitch, and Cupid for a capering moppeting puppet, and swore he would set up a hutch-trap for the Cz—a, fetch her down, and have *her* for his wife. He added, that he had always predicted the ruin of himself and his dominions from that speckled planet Venus, and that he would pursue and bring them back, were not he afraid of being bound there for a thousand years, and that they would prove the Millenium; for *Michael* take me, says he, if ever there be a
thousand

thousand years peace on my earth! But, in truth, says he, I rejoice that *Proserpine* is gone, and that I have fairly got rid of her, together with the forcerefs *Pleasure*, and the brat *Cupid*; for, added he, there has scarcely been a villain living but has, at one time or other, had his mind softened by them, so that I have had but few thorough-bred offspring even on my own earth; and Michael fetch me if I myself have always been myself because of them, d——n me! It is true that the conduct of mankind, both in word and deed, generally corresponds with my most sanguine wishes: that their knavery and brutality keep due pace with the wanton execrations of their bodies and souls uttered without number every hour without any visible motive but my gratification: that the mock laws against the latter, greatly promote them; and that filthy *Lust* is a very excellent assistant and friend of mine, though *Cupid*, as the urchin himself observed, is quite of another cast. Adds Pluto, it is not without good reason, I flatter myself, that, to say nothing of common swearers and

and Mahometans, many Christian magistrates when they swear to administer justice than which nothing is farther from their intentions; and sovereigns when they direct *Te Deum* to be sung for success in their designs of laying waste and subduing kingdoms, squint towards me.

Warton. I am inclined to think, Doctor, that, by this time you are less attached to the earth than you was.

Johnson. Sir, you are right: from what I have picked up concerning Venus, no one would return to the earth, where worthy beings are thinner than valuable plants, and worthless thicker than weeds, could he have the whole.

Warton. Let me here observe what has occurred to me, that the universe, its vacuum however, must be necessarily infinite, that it is as difficult to set bounds to it as to eternity. The creation proper, as it might be termed, may indeed have bounds;
but

but it is impossible to conceive, suppose what you may, plenums or vacuums, but that there must be still one or the other, still somewhat beyond, carry your imagination whither you will. So that when we say God created the world out of nothing, we perhaps mean that he furnished a dark vacuum with bodies and substances of different kinds. Concerning the planets, except the earth, Moses has acquainted us with nothing, because he knew nothing. The study of astronomy is most marvellous and stupendous, at which the petty affairs of men hide indeed their diminished heads. The late discoveries of Mr. Herschel of volcanoes in the moon, of the Georgium Sidus, of its satellites, and immense magnitude exceeding all the bodies of our planetary system, are curious and mighty indeed, if true, and must render his name immortal. I hope you will pardon this digression.

Johnson. Pluto, you remember, called *Venus* speckled; the reason of which is, I understand, that she is cased with a substance resembling

sembling marble, but gemmed with different precious stones, the cause of her bright appearance, whilst the earth is hardly visible to her inhabitants. Your physiologists on earth are extremely ignorant, and without conception of any material substance that could endure hardly the solar heat of Venus, certainly not of Mercury for an hour; not of a comet in its perihelion for a minute, but it would be melted and calcined into atoms; and yet some men have had the presumption to set bounds to the power of Providence. Though the torrid zone of Venus is, or would be, insufferably hot and uninhabitable to most kinds of material beings, yet by a peculiar *concordia discors*, very little analogous to any with which we are acquainted, the surface of this planet emits from itself a light and warmth which is counteracted by the rays of the sun, not totally different from the extinction of fires by the sun; so that by these means, combined with the varying effects of different atmospheres, whilst the center of the planet is thus corrected,

and

and the heat moderated, the polar regions have an intrinsic light and heat; the former of which, about equal to twilight, renders a moon not necessary. And it is very probable, that Providence, by means of various incomprehensible modifications, resembling the endless variety of other parts of nature within our cognizance, may have thus rendered places habitable and comfortable. As to spiritual beings, unaffected by matter, all extremities either of heat or cold are probably the same to them, the suns themselves, or the polar circles of the most distant planets.

Though the appearance of the surface of Venus is thus, it is, notwithstanding, fertile in endless varieties of most beautiful plants, as much superior to those of the warmest regions of the earth, as they to those of the Northern. But as the corporeal consistence of the inhabitants is infinitely more excellent and refined than that of the inhabitants of earth, whose depraved nature, both in mind and body, is really mortifying

ing and disgusting to confiderate and truly delicate perfons; fo the vegetables of this planet do not become grofs food, but fuch as the reader may endeavour to conceive in the idea of ambrofia; much lefs do the inhabitants eat the flefh of other animals; fo that I muft own that the ideas of the ancient heathens were not all contemptible. Correfpondent with the leffer vegetables, are the trees, which fhooting up in innumerable forms of variegated beauty, by the fides of numberlefs fprings and natural fountains rifing through the marble furface, and fpreading into cryftal rivers and canals, over which fruits of various gliftening hue hang dangling and dancing in the mirrour, verify almoft literally,

There filver rivers thro' enamell'd meadows glide,
And golden trees enrich their fide—

whilft the glorious orb of the fun fufpended like an immense furnace, in a clear blue fky, adorns the fcene with celeftial radiance, diffufing a delightful warmth without

R fcorching

scorching heat. This, it is true, is no more than what some spots of the earth may present, with resembling, but inferior beauty, that portion of paradisaical happiness which survived the fall, yet sure of being contaminated with some alloy annexed to the race of Adam. In this blissful region, fear, anxiety, ambition, envy, malice, strife, and the rest of the baneful crew of tormentors, are unknown. Whilst on earth even artificial good nature, good manners, is, in this polite age; as it is denominated, laid aside, and every person is haughty and eager to announce his scornful importance and the contempt in which he holds others; it is in that planet improved into universal complacency and benevolence, and joined with gratitude to the genius of the place to which they ascribe all the blessings of which their cup is full, whilst the glow of the health of eternal youth dances in their viens flushed with joy, but not agitated with lust, to whom these other lines of Cowley,

Such

Such robes the fairs departed wear,
 Woven all with light divine ;
 Such their exalted bodies are,
 And with such full glory shine—

are finely applicable.

Warton. Indeed, indeed, Doctor, you will make me hang myself, that I may anticipate those happy regions, and enter them a volunteer ;—

“ O 'tis too much for man, but let it ne'er be less ! ”

O when, O when shall we get loose from this vain world, the abode of guilt and sorrow, and from flogging dull boys ! I long, I long to tread yon milky way to the bright palace of eternal day ! O what, what wonders are above in the vast abyfs of the skies, to which man, though grovelling here below in the shadow of death, is allied ! You observe that the sun hangs over Venus like a mighty furnace ; what then must be its appearance to the inhabitants of Mercury ! and what a boiling caldron of fire must itself be ! Let us but fancy ourselves spiritual

R 2

beings,

beings, seated in a comet at its remotest distance from the sun, that appears little larger than a star, whence we shall by degrees pass into its very neighbourhood; what an astonishing contrast! As we travel on, we survey the planets becoming visible by degrees, but at first clustering round the sun: till, advancing, we perceive them at different distances, and of different sizes; calculate how near we shall approach to each of them; perhaps pass near enough to the Georgium Sidus, or Jupiter, to be astonished at their stupendous magnitude, and perhaps have a glimpse of some immense proportionate structure on one or other of them; or near enough to Saturn to discover the nature of his ring; and at length see the sun itself become more and more a tempestuous billowy boundless ocean of fire, and perhaps rush sudden into the midst of it as into a whirlpool, whilst it roars still louder and more dreadful at the accession of new fuel. And still perhaps this unfathomable fiery abyss, prodigious beyond all conception, may be but one of a million
of

of lesser ones, inconsiderable in comparison of one a million times larger than any of these, perhaps the throne itself of God ; for, in truth, when we say the second, third, or seventh heavens, it is but words without meaning, over our heads or under our feet being in effect the same,

Johnson. This is fine indeed, at which a Christmas tavern-fire hides its diminished head, how savory soever it used to be, and the excursions of my *Rambler* were small in comparison. One might imagine that you had taken a trip beforehand into Venus, and enjoyed a dream there ; where dreams are exquisite, fraught with visions of light ethereal sleep engendered by ambrosia and nectar.

Warton. It is probable that, in a country like that, the inhabitants of which seem to be half spiritualized, they have modes of travelling, far superior to ours on earth.—Have they balloons?

Johnson. Yes, Sir : and a story wanders,
that

that *Pleasure*, *Proserpine*, and *Cupid*, invented them soon after their arrival, for the use chiefly of *Proserpine*; *Pleasure* usually travelling in the air with *Cupid* in his carriages drawn by swans, or doves: and *Proserpine* imagining that, from her abode with *Pluto*, she could sustain the heat of the planet *Mercury*, declared that she would attempt a journey thither in her balloon. She accordingly set off one evening, was absent for a considerable time, and when she returned gave out, though it was considered as a forgery, that she had hovered near enough to get intelligence that *Pluto* pursuing them on their elopement, had mistaken *Mercury* for *Venus*, or imagined that they were gone to *Mercury*, intending to put him on a wrong scent, and that he had settled there.

This conversation between the good Doctors made such an impression on me, that, in my dream, I determined to borrow her balloon of *Proserpine* and go up to *Venus* myself: but no sooner was I arrived in the clouds than, entangled among them, I
 seemed

seemed to tumble out headlong, and awoke ; so that I might be said to mistake a cloud for Juno. But I had another nap, during which, methought Dr. Johnson presented something like the following letter, from a spirit of his acquaintance in Mercury, somewhat resembling the Cock-lane ghost, as follows :

“ DEAR DOCTOR,

“ The planet Mercury, my present residence, comparable, from its activity to
 “ the mineral of the same name, is far from
 “ being so ill adapted to the habitation
 “ even of men, as is generally imagined ;
 “ so that you need not so grievously regret
 “ your relinquishment of dear earth, especially as I assure you of a haunch of venison whenever you shall promise us a
 “ visit. Perhaps you may suppose that the
 “ sun is here amply sufficient to roast it, or
 “ an ox whole ; but that is not the case
 “ even under the line. For though the sun
 “ is not at more than a quarter of the distance
 “ tance

" tance from us that it is from the earth,
 " it does not appear larger than a tea-table,
 " by reason of the thinness of the atmos-
 " phere, and, from the same cause, emits
 " much less heat than might be imagined,
 " as you know the mountains of Peru are
 " covered with snow. And thus we un-
 " derstand that the appearance of the sun,
 " and temperature of the climate in Mars,
 " are nearly the same as of the earth, by
 " means of the grossness of the atmosphere,
 " which retains warmth a long time, like
 " water after sun-set. From Jupiter we
 " hear, that his belts are luminous bodies
 " imparting heat, whereby also the sun is
 " multiplied in a manner correspondent to
 " his moons, as in Saturn, it, by means
 " of his ring and other apparatus, is re-
 " flected and multiplied in a wonderful
 " manner. As to the Georgium Sidus,
 " we have no post established from thence,
 " though it is not to be doubted that his
 " apparatus is very great and wonderful, to
 " reconcile the prodigious distance of the
 " sun which would appear to human eyes
 little

“ little more than a star of the first magni-
 “ tude. Of comets, I can neither say nor con-
 “ ceive, it being deemed impracticable for
 “ mails to reach them, reconcilable with their
 “ excessively unequal distance from the sun :
 “ only that as Dr. Reid holds Sir Isaac
 “ Newton little better than a fool in op-
 “ tics ; so his theory is, in regard to comets
 “ at least, certainly weak, in imagining
 “ them merely set agoing in a vacuum,
 “ and to have continued their wild courses
 “ ever since by means of gravitation ; which,
 “ on the contrary, would, were not their
 “ orbits maintained by an unknown power,
 “ continuing their impetus, have precipi-
 “ tated them into the sun. Again, Sir
 “ Isaac’s cause assigned for the tide on the
 “ part of the globe opposite to the moon
 “ and sun in conjunction ; that the sea in
 “ the nadir being less attracted than other
 “ parts, gravitates less towards the center
 “ of the earth, and is consequently higher,
 “ is no less futile : since to such negative
 “ cause equally operating on the sea on
 “ the part of the globe over which the sun
 “ and moon act in conjunction, their con-
 S “ current

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“ current attraction, a positive cause, of
“ causes, is superadded.

“ As to the milky way, it may be no
“ very wild imagination to suppose it to
“ be heaven.”



F I N I S.

